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## Events, Opportunities

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HEADLINE	07/06 US DNI outlines 3 Ukraine war scenarios
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/06/briefing/ukraine-war-three-scenarios.html?action=click&amp;module=RelatedLinks&amp;pgtype=Article">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/06/briefing/ukraine-war-three-scenarios.html?action=click&amp;module=RelatedLinks&amp;pgtype=Article</a>

Avril Haines, the U.S. director of national intelligence, recently outlined three plausible scenarios in Ukraine.

In the first, Russia's continuing progress in eastern Ukraine would break Ukrainians' will to fight and allow the Russian military to take over even more of the country. This outcome is Vladimir Putin's new goal after being defeated in his initial attempt to oust Ukraine's government.

In the second scenario — the most likely one, Haines said ([during a public appearance](#) in Washington last week) — Russia would dominate the east but would not be able to go much farther. The two countries would fall into a stalemate that Haines described as “a grinding struggle.”

In the third scenario, Ukraine would halt Russia's advance in the east and also succeed in launching counterattacks. Ukraine has already regained some territory, especially in the southern part of the country, and some military experts expect a broader offensive soon.

### **Temporary or permanent**

*Has the tide definitively turned or are Ukrainian forces about to have more success?*

The most recent phase of the war has gone well for Russia. The eastern part of Ukraine, known as the Donbas region, has two provinces — Luhansk and Donetsk. Russia now controls virtually all of Luhansk and about 60 percent of Donetsk, according to Thomas Bullock, an analyst for Janes, a company specializing in intelligence issues.

Yesterday, Russian forces increased their shelling near Bakhmut, a city in Donetsk that's an important Ukrainian supply hub. Russia used a similar tactic in Luhansk to clear Ukrainian forces and civilians before taking over cities.

“The Kremlin is sending the message that their overall plans haven't changed and that everything is going according to plan,” Anton Troianovski, The Times's Moscow bureau chief, said. In a sign of confidence in the Kremlin, Russian media have recently been reporting plans for holding referendums in the captured territories and formally annexing them, Anton added.

But Ukraine does continue to benefit from an influx of sophisticated weapons from the West. And there is some reason to wonder whether Ukrainian troops will soon be able to make better use of those weapons than they have so far.

In the initial phase of the war, the U.S., E.U. and other Ukrainian allies were sending relatively simple weapons, like the shoulder-fired missile systems known as Javelins. Those weapons helped Ukraine defend territory from small groups of Russian forces. More recently, the West has sent more powerful artillery — like the HIMARS, a truck-based rocket system — meant to help Ukraine withstand the massive buildup of Russian troops in the east.

Training somebody to use a Javelin can take just a few hours, my colleague Julian Barnes points out. Training troops to use a HIMARS can take days or weeks — as does transporting them to the battlefield. In coming weeks, Julian said he would be watching to see whether Ukraine would be able to use its growing supply of HIMARS to inflict more damage on Russian troops.

### **No Russian draft**

*Is Russia running out of troops?*

Two recent developments have offered reason to wonder. First, Russia has had to turn to outside troops — like those from [the Wagner Group](#), a private company — to replenish their units, as my colleague Thomas Gibbons-Neff explained [in his recent analysis of the war](#). Second, Putin ordered some of the troops involved in recent victories in the Donbas region to rest, suggesting that those units were exhausted.

“American officials and outside analysts both agree if Russia wants to move beyond the Donbas, they will need to take a step they have been unwilling to do: a mass mobilization,” Julian said. “Russia will need to conduct a military draft, recall soldiers who previously served and take politically painful steps to rebuild their force. So far, Putin has been unwilling to do so.”

Russia has many more resources than Ukraine, including soldiers and weapons. But Russia’s resources do have limits, especially if Putin is unwilling to spend political capital on a mass mobilization.

These limits raise the prospect that Ukraine can hold Russia’s gains to the east and slowly exhaust Russian troops with counterattacks and internal resistance — as well as Western economic sanctions. That situation, in turn, could lead Putin to accept an eventual cease-fire that leaves most of Ukraine intact.

“That will not be a perfect victory,” Julian said, “but it might be realistic.”

### **Shell shock**

*But is Ukraine running out of troops even faster?*

Both sides appear to be suffering a similarly high rate of casualties — hundreds per day. As a result, Ukraine has had to rely increasingly on troops with little training.

The surviving troops are also at risk of psychological damage. The method of fighting in the east — an unceasing exchange of artillery — resembles the trench warfare of World War I, which gave rise to the term “shell shock,” my colleague Thomas notes.

“During the artillery shelling, all you can do is lay in the shelter and wait for the shelling to end,” one Ukrainian commander told The Times. “Some people get mentally damaged because of such shelling. They are found to be psychologically not ready for whatever they encounter.”

As uncertain as the future may be in Ukraine, the present is clearly dire, as Haines acknowledged when outlining the three scenarios last week. “In short,” she said, “the picture remains pretty grim.”

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HEADLINE	<b>07/06 Displaced looms as Ukraine challenge</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/07/06/world/russia-ukraine-war-news#the-plight-of-the-displaced-looms-as-one-of-ukraines-greatest-challenges">https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/07/06/world/russia-ukraine-war-news#the-plight-of-the-displaced-looms-as-one-of-ukraines-greatest-challenges</a>
GIST	<p>An estimated third of Ukraine’s population has been forced from their homes since Russia invaded in February, including more than 7.1 million people who are displaced inside the country, according to United Nations data, illustrating the scale of a humanitarian crisis that has gone largely unseen as the war grinds on.</p> <p>The number of internally displaced people dwarfs the 4.8 million Ukrainians who have fled into Europe as refugees, according to the U.N. refugee agency, which has described levels of displacement unseen since World War II.</p> <p>While large swaths of the country were subject to the brutality of the Russian invasion in its early weeks, most of Ukraine’s displaced are now coming from the east, as that region becomes the center of the conflict.</p> <p>Boarding trains and buses, civilians have poured out of cities and towns across eastern Ukraine, fleeing for the relative safety of the west and the northern capital, Kyiv. Some have left in humanitarian convoys, navigating treacherous roadways amid the threat of gunfire or shelling. Others have left on foot, literally running for their lives.</p> <p>And as Russian forces now train their artillery on Donetsk Province in the east, aiming to capture all of the industrial Donbas region, more people are being forced from their homes daily. Shellfire by Russian forces</p>

killed five civilians in Donetsk in the last 24 hours, the head of the regional military government, Pavlo Kyrylenko, said on Wednesday on the Telegram social messaging app.

For days, Mr. Kyrylenko has advised residents to leave the province, a sign that Ukrainian authorities believe that fighting will escalate. Officials hope to avoid having to attempt large-scale evacuations as in the neighboring province of Luhansk, which fell to the Russians in recent days.

Just three million people have officially been registered as internally displaced, although the true number is believed to be more than double that. A shortfall in international humanitarian support has further strained local resources.

“The state was not ready for such a scale of displaced persons in many areas,” Vitaly Muzychenko, the deputy minister of social policy for Ukraine, told a news conference this week, where he announced new plans to register displaced people for state benefits.

This mass displacement has reshaped communities across the country, even those that have been spared the physical devastation of the war. Shelters have sprung up in public buildings, university dorms have been converted and some modular homes have been set up to house the displaced.

The majority of internally displaced people, much like refugees, are women and children, and many face shortages of food, water and basic necessities, according to U.N. experts.

Oksana Zelinska, 40, who was the principal of a preschool in the southern city of Kherson, which is now occupied by Russian forces, fled in April with her two children, a co-worker and that woman’s children to the western city of Uzhhorod near the Slovakian border. Her husband has remained behind in Kherson, and she would like to return, but she said she stays in the west for her children.

“When we came here, I needed to do something, it was difficult and I didn’t want to sit around getting depressed,” she said. “I wanted to be useful.”

She began volunteering at the community kitchen that she had used when she first arrived, peeling potatoes and preparing food for the dozens who troop in daily for a hot meal.

Helping the displaced return to their homes — or find new ones — looms as one of Ukraine’s greatest challenges, whatever the outcome of the war. Some of their hometowns may not return to Ukrainian control. Others that are retaken could be almost entirely destroyed, with homes, water lines and other vital infrastructure pulverized by the Russian Army’s scorched-earth tactics.

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HEADLINE	<b>07/06 Europe: gas, nuclear energy is ‘green’</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/06/world/europe/eu-green-energy-gas-nuclear.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/06/world/europe/eu-green-energy-gas-nuclear.html</a>
GIST	<p>BRUSSELS — In a landmark vote for Europe’s climate and energy policies, lawmakers said on Wednesday that some gas and nuclear energy projects should be considered “green” and receive access to cheap loans and even state subsidies.</p> <p>A European Parliament meeting in Strasbourg, France, voted in favor of accepting a proposal by the European Commission, the E.U. executive, with 328 votes backing the proposal and 278 against.</p> <p>Both inside the parliamentary chambers and outside the building, detractors of the policy booed in protest.</p> <p>The commission’s proposal to label gas and nuclear as “green” is part of a broader new E.U. law that classifies various types of energy investments as environmentally friendly, and lays out detailed rules on how to assess them.</p>

The policy, known as the “taxonomy,” is meant to stop “greenwashing,” the pervasive practice of mislabeling energy projects as environmentally friendly. It would also give the bloc, which brings together 27 industrialized and wealthy nations, added wiggle room as it scrambles to replace Russian energy sources in its effort to penalize the Kremlin for its invasion of Ukraine this year.

But the classification remains controversial in environmental circles. Critics of the proposal contend the attempt to classify gas and nuclear projects as green is in itself “greenwashing” and runs counter to [European efforts to slash carbon emissions](#) by 55 percent by 2030 and to reach carbon neutrality by 2050.

Europe’s decision is likely to reverberate well beyond the region’s borders as its policy may be held up as a global benchmark and replicated in other parts of the world, according to experts.

A “green” classification for gas and nuclear provides financial incentives for European countries and companies to invest in those energy sources, and, critics say, would delay fully switching to renewable sources that are much better for the environment, such as wind and solar energy.

The European Commission has said that it knows that gas and nuclear are not perfectly aligned with environmental goals, but that it still considers them important in Europe’s transition from its current energy mix toward a carbon-neutral future. It calls gas a “low emission” fuel, which is accurate, but only if compared to coal, which is very polluting.

These goals, and the means to achieve them over the next few decades, are key to Europe’s efforts to lead the world on climate policy. But they have also become central to its stand against Russia’s aggression in Ukraine.

So far E.U. nations have banned Russian coal and most will phase out even the import of Russian oil, but they remain especially dependent on Russian natural gas for electricity and heating.

Russia has used its gas exports to Europe as a lever to exert pressure on the European Union. The bloc is trying to get gas from other sources, such as Africa, the Middle East and the United States, but is far from banning the Russian imports because it needs them too much.

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HEADLINE	<b>07/06 L.A. Covid cases hit new summer high</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2022-07-06/la-coronavirus-cases-hit-new-summer-high">https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2022-07-06/la-coronavirus-cases-hit-new-summer-high</a>
GIST	<p>Los Angeles County’s coronavirus case rate hit its highest point in nearly five months over the Fourth of July holiday weekend, a troubling sign of how two new super-infectious Omicron strains are creating conditions for a fraught summer.</p> <p>Two Omicron subvariants, BA.4 and BA.5, have become dominant nationwide, and they appear to be among the most contagious yet of this pandemic.</p> <p>Coronavirus case rates have also been increasing statewide, with the San Francisco Bay Area reporting California’s highest rate. Hospitalizations have also been creeping up, but hospitals haven’t reported being overwhelmed. Still, experts are concerned the next weeks could see more rapid spread that would put new pressures on the healthcare system.</p> <p>“Right now, if we go up more, it is going to get into a little bit more of a danger zone with hospitalizations,” with a potential to strain the healthcare system, said Dr. Peter Chin-Hong, a UC San Francisco infectious-disease expert.</p> <p>Too many coronavirus-positive patients can impact hospital operations, even if they’re being treated for non-COVID-19 reasons, because of the resources needed to isolate them, Chin-Hong said.</p>

One of the biggest concerns about BA.4 and BA.5 is that people can get reinfected even after suffering from an earlier Omicron subvariant. Dr. Robert Wachter, chair of UC San Francisco's Department of Medicine, wrote that this could mean elevated infection levels through the summer and into the fall.

"Beyond that, much depends on whether a new variant emerges to supplant it. Given the pattern of the past year, it would be foolish to bet against that," he wrote over the weekend.

The rise of the latest subvariant, BA.5, he added, is particularly notable because "prior infection — including an Omicron infection as recent as last month — no longer provides robust protection from reinfection."

"We're seeing such folks get reinfected within one to two months," he added.

Vaccinations and boosters remain "hugely valuable in preventing a severe case that might lead to hospital/death," Wachter wrote. "But its value in preventing a case of COVID, or preventing transmission, is now far less than it once was."

The increasing dominance of Omicron subvariants BA.4 and BA.5 could put L.A. County, the nation's most populous county, even closer to reinstating a universal mask order for indoor public spaces perhaps later this month or next month if trends hold.

Experts are urging people to get up-to-date on their vaccinations, and that includes getting a first booster shot, or a second booster if eligible. Vaccinations and booster shots have been key factors in keeping hospitalizations relatively modest for now.

Don't wait for an Omicron-specific booster, they said, since its rollout will likely be delayed until November to incorporate a vaccination formula designed against the more recent Omicron subvariants, rather than the oldest version, which scientists fear would be relatively obsolete by then.

"My advice is to go ahead and get" a booster now, Chin-Hong said. There remain questions about exactly how available the autumn Omicron-specific booster will be, considering that Congress has not yet approved billions of dollars needed for pandemic-control efforts, including money to pre-order vaccinations.

If federal officials are still hamstrung by limited funds later this year, the autumn Omicron-specific vaccination may "only be available for a limited group of people," perhaps only for those age 65 and over, Chin-Hong said.

"I don't know what's going to happen in November. And we do know that BA.4 and BA.5 is starting to rage right now. So you might as well go and protect yourself against what we know," Chin-Hong said.

Anecdotally, some residents are describing substantial discomfort with recent COVID-19 illness, even if they're not hospitalized. "My heart rate was so high," wrote one commenter on Reddit, with others describing their children suffering fevers hitting 104 degrees.

"It's either chills where you are shivering and need a blanket, to sweating under the blanket," wrote another commenter. "The sore throat is like shards of crushed glass every single time you swallow," a third wrote.

"It's very unpleasant for many people," Chin-Hong said. He said a colleague of his likely got infected from her children, and during her acute illness, "she couldn't multitask anymore ... for a time, she was sort of at wit's end not feeling normal for quite a few weeks."

Long COVID, in which symptoms like brain fog and fatigue can last for months or years, is also a risk after contracting COVID-19, even among people who are vaccinated and boosted.

Eighty percent of L.A. County residents have completed their primary vaccination series, but there are still many vaccinated people who haven't received a single booster shot. Among those age 5 and up eligible for at least one booster, 56% have received one.

Among L.A. County residents age 50 and up eligible for a second booster shot, only 33% have received it.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says everyone age 5 and up should get one booster shot. Those age 50 and up, and some people age 12 and up with weakened immune systems, should get a second booster shot, the CDC says.

Among vaccinated people, those who haven't received a booster shot are more likely to need hospitalization, Chin-Hong said.

Doctors are also warning that simply relying on vaccinations alone is not enough to guard against infection, and health officials are strongly recommending mask use in indoor public settings.

"The increase in positive cases among fully vaccinated individuals does likely reflect the dominance of newer Omicron subvariants that both spread more easily and are able to evade some of the vaccine protection against infections," L.A. County Public Health Director Barbara Ferrer said last week.

Unvaccinated people age 5 and up were just one-and-a-half times as likely to test positive for the coronavirus than vaccinated people — a group that includes those who got boosted and didn't get boosted — for the 14-day period that ended June 9, Ferrer said.

By contrast, half a year ago, unvaccinated people were about three-and-a-half times as likely to test positive for the coronavirus compared to vaccinated-but-not-boosted people, according to L.A. County data for the weekly period that ended Dec. 4.

Protection against being hospitalized is still substantial for the vaccinated, but it has also weakened over time. Half a year ago, an unvaccinated person was 13 times as likely to be hospitalized with a coronavirus infection than a vaccinated person. Now, an unvaccinated person is almost 4 times as likely to be hospitalized.

For deaths, half a year ago, an unvaccinated person was 17 times as likely to die from COVID-19; now, an unvaccinated person is 8 times as likely to die.

Despite the reduction in effectiveness, "the approved FDA vaccines are in fact doing exactly what we need them to do. They're preventing severe illness and death," Ferrer said.

Put another way, of the nearly 7 million L.A. County residents who have completed their primary vaccination series, about 13% have tested positive in results sent to government officials, 0.2% have been hospitalized and 0.03% have died.

Many people are now getting their positive test results from at-home test kits whose results aren't reported to officials. But "even if we're doubling this number — so that we can account for those who tested using over-the-counter test kits — many fully vaccinated people have not yet been infected," Ferrer said.

There has been some debate as to whether younger adults should be made eligible for a second booster shot now. Ferrer has been among those asking the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to conduct a new review of data to reconsider allowing more people to get a second booster sooner.

Chin-Hong is among the experts who thinks opening up the eligibility to a second booster makes sense.

"At the minimum, it will kind of bolster people's antibodies, even though" the boosters are not specifically designed to target BA.4 and BA.5, Chin-Hong said. "To me, it will be more convenient to just liberalize it to everyone."



But federal officials have not signaled they are prepared imminently to widen availability of the second booster to those under age 50 who aren't immunocompromised.

On the Fourth of July, Los Angeles County recorded an average of about 5,500 coronavirus cases a day over the prior week, the highest such figure since early February, when the first Omicron surge was fading. On a per capita basis, that was equal to 383 cases a week for every 100,000 residents; a rate of 100 or more cases a week for every 100,000 residents is considered high.

By Tuesday, the case rate declined slightly to 376 cases a week for every 100,000 residents, but that likely was a result of delayed reporting over the holiday weekend. The latest case rate was still 9% higher than it was the prior week.

Last week, L.A. County recorded its highest weekly rate of new coronavirus-positive hospitalizations since February — 8.3 hospitalizations for every 100,000 residents, up from 7.3 for the prior week. If that rate hits 10 or more for two consecutive weeks, L.A. County health officials plan to impose a new universal mask mandate in indoor public settings for everyone age 2 and up.

The mandate would remain until the rate falls below that threshold for two consecutive weeks.

The Omicron subvariants BA.4 and BA.5 comprised an estimated 70.1% of new cases nationwide for the weeklong period that ended Saturday, according to the CDC. This completes a stunning rise to dominance for the duo of subvariants, which only a month earlier was thought to be responsible for a bit less than 16% of new cases.

Omicron has spawned a number of subvariants since emerging late last fall, and those have largely been characterized by ramped-up infectivity. But “BA.5 is a different beast with a new superpower: Enough alteration in the spike protein that immunity from either prior vax or prior Omicron infection (including recent infection) doesn't offer much protection,” according to Wachter.

“As BA.5 becomes the dominant U.S. variant, its behavior will determine our fate for the next few months, until it either burns itself out by infecting so many people or is replaced by a variant that's even better at infecting people,” Wachter wrote on Twitter. “Neither is a joyful scenario.”

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HEADLINE	<b>07/06 Seattle PD seeks to re-fire parking officer</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.axios.com/newsletters/axios-seattle-be7acd79-ad2d-4c32-adff-5d6f768ebb22.html?">https://www.axios.com/newsletters/axios-seattle-be7acd79-ad2d-4c32-adff-5d6f768ebb22.html?</a>
GIST	<p><b>The Seattle Police Department</b> is seeking a judge's help to terminate a parking enforcement officer who made a comment endorsing lynching.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Jonathan Skeie was <a href="#">already fired in early 2021</a> over his statement — but he's back at work after being reinstated by an arbitrator.</li></ul> <p><b>Flashback:</b> Interim Seattle police chief Adrian Diaz <a href="#">fired Skeie last year</a> after Skeie said, "I don't understand why we can't just bring back lynching," or a very similar statement, according to <a href="#">internal investigation files</a> submitted in court.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Skeie made the comment in front of two other parking enforcement officers while working in the office in June 2020, during the height of Seattle's Black Lives Matter protests, the documents say.</li></ul> <p><b>Driving the news:</b> The police department and the city <a href="#">filed a petition</a> in King County Superior Court last week, asking a judge to reverse the <a href="#">January arbitration decision</a> that gave Skeie his job back.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The city's petition argues that arbitrator Richard Eadie's decision was "erroneous" and violates the state's anti-discrimination and anti-harassment law.</li><li>In that arbitration order, Eadie ruled the police department's termination of Skeie was "excessive" and didn't match how similar cases had been handled before.</li><li>Skeie received a 30-day suspension, but was reinstated and has been back on the job since April.</li></ul>



	<p><b>Why it matters:</b> The police department and city say the arbitrator's decision to rehire Skeie — who was fired for race-based harassment — sends a damaging message that racism from city employees will go unpunished.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The case also tests the city's ability to challenge the determinations of arbitrators, who some Seattle and Washington state officials have argued shouldn't be able to easily overturn police chiefs' disciplinary actions.</li> </ul> <p><b>Of note:</b> Although Skeie was a civilian employee in the police department at the time of his firing, he — along with the rest of Seattle's parking enforcement division — has <a href="#">since been moved</a> to the city transportation department.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/05 Finland seizes hundreds Russia freight cars</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/finland-seizes-hundreds-russian-freight-cars-eu-sanctions-bite-2022-07-05/">https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/finland-seizes-hundreds-russian-freight-cars-eu-sanctions-bite-2022-07-05/</a>
GIST	<p>MOSCOW, July 5 (Reuters) - Finland has seized nearly a thousand freight cars belonging to Russian companies as a result of European Union sanctions, according to Finnish state-owned rail operator VR and a letter from Russia's rail monopoly seen by Reuters.</p> <p>As Finland's VR moved to reduce railway traffic with Russia after the EU sanctioned Russian coal supplies in April, 865 rail cars from Russia were seized by bailiffs, according to the June 6 dated letter from Russian Railways to the Ministry of Transport.</p> <p>Finnish bailiff authority told Reuters it has had frozen assets of a few dozen of Russian and Belarusian individuals and legal entities, including transportation firms, worth at least 82 million euros, to comply with EU sanctions.</p> <p>VR's spokeswoman Taina Kuitunen confirmed by email that there were "around 800 units of sanctioned (freight) cars in Finland at the moment" and the company sought to return the non-seized ones to Russia as soon as possible.</p> <p>VR's head of logistics told Finnish media in March that around 5,000 Russian rail cars were in Finland when it decided to suspend traffic, and while his company wanted to send them back, bailiffs ordered some to be seized.</p> <p>The seized rail cars belong to companies either directly hit by EU sanctions or whose shareholders gave up their control because they got hit by sanctions after Russia sent its troops into Ukraine in late February.</p> <p>Uralchem-Trans, whose former owner, Dmitry Mazepin, ceded control after coming under EU sanctions in March, did not reply to request for a comment, and the state leasing company GTLK, under EU sanctions itself, declined comment.</p> <p>Rusagrotrans, part of Demetra Holding where sanctions-hit state bank VTB (VTBR.MM) ceded control to other investors in February, also declined comment.</p> <p>The fourth company whose cars were seized, Alpha Leasing, has lodged an appeal to a Finnish court against an "unlawful" move by Finnish bailiffs, said Andrey Barkov, head of corporate business. Alpha Leasing is a unit of sanctions-hit Alfa Bank.</p> <p>Russian Railways declined comment and the Ministry of Transport did not reply to a request for comment.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/05 Report: migrants escape rate up 18% 2022</b>
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SOURCE	<a href="https://www.newsmax.com/newsfront/usa-mexico-border-migrants/2022/07/05/id/1077443/">https://www.newsmax.com/newsfront/usa-mexico-border-migrants/2022/07/05/id/1077443/</a>
GIST	<p>More than 476,000 migrants escaped apprehension from the U.S. Customs and Border Protection during the Fiscal Year 2022 (July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022) — an 18.3% increase from the 389,000 "got-aways" for the previous fiscal year, according to a report from Breitbart News.</p> <p>Citing a source from the Breitbart piece, <a href="#">the Border Patrol</a> historically relies upon traditional techniques to locate and count footprints, along with other physical evidence left behind at popular migrant crossings.</p> <p>However, the last metric has been all but removed from the equation, since Border Patrol currently doesn't have <a href="#">the requisite manpower</a> for prolonged migrant trackings and apprehensions.</p> <p>A typical day of border monitoring yields roughly 7,000 migrant arrests, according to Breitbart.</p> <p>In some areas, though, large migrant groups are taxing Border Patrol resources and contributing to the increased number of got-aways. As reported by Breitbart, in one Texas border town alone, <a href="#">1,772 migrants were apprehended</a> in one day.</p> <p>In April, Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas testified to members of the House Judiciary Committee that there were more than <a href="#">389,000 got-aways</a> in fiscal year 2021.</p> <p>At the current pace, next year's projected number of got-aways will nearly double this year's count, according to the CBP source.</p> <p>Earlier this week, Secretary Mayorkas said the federal government had cleared out <a href="#">more budget space</a> in 2023 for additional Border Patrol hires.</p> <p>Stemming from a recent Supreme Court ruling, the Department of Homeland Security will soon end the Trump era Migrant Protection Protocols program, otherwise known as the "<a href="#">remain in Mexico</a>" policy. Mayorkas expressed his approval over the ruling which allows CBP to stop returning migrants to Mexico, as they await asylum processing.</p> <p>In May, a record number of migrants <a href="#">unlawfully crossed</a> the U.S.-Mexico border.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/05 Texas county declares 'invasion' migrants</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.newsmax.com/politics/texas-border-migrants-invasion/2022/07/05/id/1077468/">https://www.newsmax.com/politics/texas-border-migrants-invasion/2022/07/05/id/1077468/</a>
GIST	<p>Kinney County, Texas, has declared the "existence of an invasion" at the U.S.-Mexico border.</p> <p>The county's declaration also calls for Texas Gov. Greg Abbott, a Republican, to "acknowledge the existence of an invasion on our border with Mexico."</p> <p>Five other counties — Uvalde, Terrell, Medina, Burnet and Goliad — spoke in support of Kinney County's declaration.</p> <p>Officials from Kinney and the other five counties met on Tuesday to discuss their concerns regarding the increasing number of migrants crossing the border from Mexico into Texas.</p> <p>A press release from Kinney County Judge Tully Shahan detailed the increase in human smuggling in the county, stating that in June, "Kinney County law enforcement has prevented over 67 smuggling attempts along our roadways.</p> <p>"This past weekend included the unfortunate deaths of 3 illegal aliens who were involved with human smuggling in Kinney County. Kinney County (Brackettville) has been forced to militarize our school campus with vehicle barriers to prevent high speed chases from entering campus and injuring children.</p>

	<p>"As a Texan, this is not acceptable. We will no longer allow the sovereignty of Texas to be invaded by those unwilling to obey our laws," Shahan continued. "That is why today, July 5, 2022, Kinney County, joined by several other counties on the Texas border, are declaring the existence of an "invasion" as used in Article IV, Section 4 of the U.S. Constitution and in Article 4, Section 7 of the Texas Constitution.</p> <p>"We are taking these steps in hopes of encouraging our Governor to acknowledge the existence of an invasion on our border with Mexico and take the necessary actions to preserve and protect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Texas."</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/06 China scathing attack on US, NATO</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://apnews.com/article/nato-russia-ukraine-beijing-antony-blinken-g-20-summit-6364598ff6948c51eeced5b0cdeecf2f">https://apnews.com/article/nato-russia-ukraine-beijing-antony-blinken-g-20-summit-6364598ff6948c51eeced5b0cdeecf2f</a>
GIST	<p>BEIJING (AP) — China launched a scathing attack on the U.S. and NATO on Wednesday, days before a meeting between U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi.</p> <p>Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian’s comments underscore the increasingly fractious relationship, along with China’s increasingly confrontational approach to foreign relations that heatedly rejects criticism.</p> <p>At <a href="#">last week’s NATO summit</a> in Spain, Blinken accused China of “seeking to undermine the rules-based international order.”</p> <p>In his comments Wednesday, Zhao said the “so-called rules-based international order is actually a family rule made by a handful of countries to serve the U.S. self-interest.”</p> <p>Washington “observes international rules only as it sees fit,” he said, adding that NATO “must renounce its blind faith in military might.”</p> <p>U.S.-China relations are dominated by disputes over issues from trade and <a href="#">human rights</a> to <a href="#">Taiwan</a> and Beijing’s <a href="#">territorial claims in the South China Sea</a>.</p> <p>Meanwhile, China has refused to condemn Russia’s four-month-long war against Ukraine, criticized sanctions brought against Moscow by NATO members and accused Washington and its allies of provoking the conflict.</p> <p>Russia and China have strengthened political, economic and military ties, while aligning their foreign policies to oppose the influence of liberal democracies. Weeks before Russia’s February invasion, Chinese leader Xi Jinping hosted his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin for a meeting at which they pledged a partnership that had “no limits.”</p> <p>At its summit, NATO for the first time singled out China as one of its strategic priorities for the next decade.</p> <p>“China is substantially building up its military forces, including nuclear weapons, bullying its neighbors, threatening Taiwan ... monitoring and controlling its own citizens through advanced technology, and spreading Russian lies and disinformation,” Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said after presenting NATO’s 10-year Strategic Concept.</p> <p>In his comments at Wednesday’s daily briefing, Zhao said the U.S. “has been working closely with NATO to hype up competition with China and stoke group confrontation.”</p> <p>“The history of NATO is the one about creating conflicts and waging wars ... arbitrarily launching wars and killing innocent civilians, even to this day,” Zhao said. “Facts have proven that it is not China that</p>

	<p>poses a systemic challenge to NATO, and instead it is NATO that brings a looming systemic challenge to world peace and security.”</p> <p>Blinken is expected to meet with Wang on Saturday at a <a href="#">meeting of foreign ministers from the Group of 20</a> leading rich and developing nations on the Indonesian island of Bali.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/06 Environmental groups in extreme measures</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.foxnews.com/politics/environmental-groups-pushing-extreme-measures-global-energy-crisis">https://www.foxnews.com/politics/environmental-groups-pushing-extreme-measures-global-energy-crisis</a>
GIST	<p>Environmental groups have <a href="#">continued to advocate and protest</a> for extreme policies to combat climate change even amid a global energy crisis.</p> <p>Organizations — including the Sierra Club, Greenpeace, the Sunrise Movement and the League of Conservation Voters — have doubled down on pushing the Green New Deal, divestment from fossil fuel projects and banning oil and gas production. High energy prices and fuel supply shortfalls, triggered largely by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, though, are <a href="#">threatening the livelihoods of millions worldwide</a>.</p> <p>"Concerns about energy shortages in Europe and the spiking fossil fuel costs Americans are experiencing are both symptoms of our continued reliance on fossil fuels," Kelly Sheehan, the senior director of energy campaigns at the Sierra Club, told Fox News Digital in a statement. "As long as we rely on volatile global commodities like oil and gas, we'll always be vulnerable to geopolitics and the whims of greedy fossil fuel executives."</p> <p>"The current situation only underscores the need to make as rapid a transition to a clean energy economy as possible by making bold investments in clean energy and energy efficiency, not doubling down on the same risky fossil fuels that got us into the mess we're in now," she continued.</p> <p>In the U.S., the average price of gasoline and diesel fuel hit record highs this month while high natural gas prices are expected to push electricity prices higher this summer. European countries, meanwhile, have been forced to increase coal reliance as a result of Russia's control of the continent's natural gas supply.</p> <p>The price and supply instability has led to renewed calls from the fossil fuel industry, Republican lawmakers and some Democrats for more domestic oil and gas production.</p> <p>But the Sierra Club has continued to advocate for the end of coal power and for blocking oil and gas project development. It also has argued for banks to divest from fossil fuel projects and for the federal government to halt leasing public lands to oil companies.</p> <p>"Public lands and waters should never be threatened by oil and gas drilling," the group states on its website. "We work to protect these special places from legislative assaults and federal regulatory rollbacks that threaten to open them up to exploitation by the fossil fuel industry."</p> <p>Greenpeace has made similar arguments in the U.S. and across the world, pushing for immediate curbs to fossil fuel use and divestment.</p> <p>Activists with Greenpeace scaled a building at the Cannes Lions Festival of Creativity, a major global conference of creative marketing firms, in France in June to protest fossil fuel advertisements and sponsorships. The group is one of dozens to sign a petition filed with the European Commission to similarly argue in favor of a ban on fossil fuel ads.</p> <p>"Europe is buzzing with how to increase oil and fossil gas production while the ground is literally burning under our feet," Greenpeace European Unit Campaigner Silvia Pastorelli said during the protest.</p>

	<p>The group has also advocated for an end to nuclear-powered electricity generation despite it being a renewable energy source. Nuclear accounts for roughly 25% of European electricity generation and 19% of electricity generation in the U.S.</p> <p>The Sunrise Movement, meanwhile, has continued to push lawmakers to pass the Green New Deal, a climate package backed by progressives in the House and Senate that would cost taxpayers tens of trillions of dollars, over the course of a decade according to the American Action Forum. The environmental group doubled down on the legislation amid the Ukraine crisis, issuing the "Green New Deal pledge" for lawmakers to sign.</p> <p>"As fossil fuel corporations destroy our communities and profit off of working families at the gas pump, our government has yet to pass climate legislation that meets the moment of crisis," Sunrise Movement Executive Director Varshini Prakash said in March. "And yet, support for the Green New Deal has never been greater."</p> <p>In May, the Sunrise Movement attempted to help unseat Rep. Henry Cuellar, D-Texas, who has taken a softer stance on oil and gas development compared to most of his fellow Democrats. Prakash said Cuellar was "fundamentally misaligned" with the Democratic Party's values.</p> <p>Cuellar and three other House Democrats asked President Joe Biden to boost oil production in a May letter. The Texas lawmaker also joined a letter last week asking the president to continue allowing oil exports.</p> <p>The League of Conservation Voters (LCV) has called for a complete ban on offshore drilling, advocated for policymakers to ensure more than 80% of fossil fuels are left unburned and pushed for Congress to pass sweeping, big-spending climate legislation via reconciliation, a process that allows passage with a simple majority.</p> <p>"Between increasingly devastating climate-fueled extreme weather events, high gas prices, and rising inflation, now is the time for the Senate to pass a transformational climate, jobs, and justice reconciliation bill that will save families money, create good paying jobs, and build a healthier, more just clean energy future," Tiernan Sittenfeld, the group's senior vice president of government affairs, said in April.</p> <p>The LCV also released its annual "national environmental scorecard" in March ranking the climate voting records of federal lawmakers. The report downgraded lawmakers who voted for more fossil fuel drilling and for the Keystone XL pipeline.</p> <p>Greenpeace, the Sunrise Movement and the LCV didn't respond to requests for comment from Fox News Digital.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/05 Seattle mayor's new 'sidewalk strategy'</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://publicola.com/2022/07/05/new-details-emerge-about-harrell-administrations-encampment-removal-plans/">https://publicola.com/2022/07/05/new-details-emerge-about-harrell-administrations-encampment-removal-plans/</a>
GIST	<p>Mayor Bruce Harrell's administration drafted a new "sidewalk strategy" for homeless encampments earlier this year that would have empowered the city's new Unified Care Team, bolstered by Seattle police, to require anyone living in a public right-of-way in Seattle to move with just two hours' notice, PubliCola has learned.</p> <p>In January, Harrell's strategic initiatives director Tim Burgess sent a memo to King County Regional Homelessness Authority director Marc Dones titled "A New Approach to Tent Encampments on Sidewalks and Other Transportation Rights-of-Way." In the memo, which PubliCola obtained through a records request, the new administration outlined a zero-tolerance strategy toward people living on sidewalks, in which "[c]ampers that remain will be given two hours' notice to leave" to leave. The Human Services Department's HOPE Team, along with King County Regional Homelessness Authority "outreach</p>

teams will offer services as appropriate, but these services will not be a prerequisite before asking campers to clear the public space,” the memo said.

Harrell spokesman Jamie Housen told PubliCola the sidewalk plan was never implemented. “Instead, the Mayor’s Office focused on streamlining City efforts through the launch of the Unified Care Team,” a group of employees from several city departments who are in charge of “address[ing] the impacts of unsheltered homelessness in the city,” Housen said. But the administration’s dramatic acceleration of encampment removals, and its decision to focus first on reducing the number of people living on downtown sidewalks to zero, echo these early policy discussions.

In addition to the memo shared by Burgess, PubliCola has obtained a [PowerPoint presentation](#) created by administration officials earlier this year describes the downtown “Partnership for Zero,” which aims to [eliminate encampments downtown](#) by relocating people to appropriate shelter or housing, as the administration’s “safe sidewalk plan.” Harrell “wants to address obstructions in the right of way ASAP,” according to the presentation.

A separate set of presentations and internal memos, obtained through the same records request, reveals another aspect of Harrell’s approach to encampment removals that the administration has been reluctant to describe publicly: An “encampment scoring system” that allocates “scores” to encampments based on a set of criteria, including violent incidents, fires, proximity to parks or children, and sidewalk obstructions.

Mayoral spokesman Jamie Housen described the scoring system as only one part of the mayor’s encampment prioritization strategy. “The scoring system is the building blocks for encampment prioritization,” Housen said. “The system is currently being tested and frequently refined as we learn more, to ensure the right information is driving decisions.”

### **The “Sidewalk Strategy”**

In a [memo from late January](#) titled “Tent Highlights,” the Harrell administration outlined the basics of a new strategy to “[e]nd tent encampments on sidewalks and transportation rights-of-ways... a step that is essential to the economic recovery of the downtown and our neighborhood business areas.”

“City staff, including specially trained police officers, will be present when campers are notified that they must relocate,” the memo continues. “This is a harm-reduction approach, meaning campers will be asked to leave/relocate so the space remains clear and accessible by all.”

Dones expressed concerns in their comments on the memo about the possibility that the city would start sweeping downtown sidewalks before the KCRHA could implement its business-funded Partnership for Zero strategy. This strategy, which is still getting underway, aims to provide intensive case management by dozens of “system advocates” who will fan out across downtown and attempt to place everyone living in the area into appropriate shelter or housing, leaving downtown effectively encampment-free.

“This seems like something that would be more successful if implemented completely after [the Partnership for Zero] drawdown phase is complete. Because then it’s about keeping sidewalks and right of ways clear,” Dones commented. The two-hour rule, Dones added, “feels difficult to enforce. How will people be made aware of the shifting rules? I would also extend the initial timeline so that when it’s announced people have X amount of time but then in the future they have Y amount of time.”

Reflecting on their comments on the memo last week, Dones said, “I don’t think that going through the city and just saying ‘No tents on sidewalks’ is feasible or advisable... and saying to folks, ‘You have two hours to move all your stuff’ is not reasonable.”

“Some of this sounds like what would make sense for implementation after [the “drawdown” phase of Partnership for Zero], as we’re talking about maintaining functional zero,” Dones added. “Then we could have that conversation about how we want to maintain spaces where people are not encamped, but the reason they’re not encamped is because we’re actively [housing or sheltering] them in real time.”



Housen, from the mayor's office, said the city "stands in partnership with the KCRHA, King County, and We Are In in our support of Partnership for Zero. We look forward to the ramp up of that project and opportunities to work in alignment and coordination with the RHA towards the goal of the project."

Asked how maintaining a visible police presence during encampment removals represented a "harm reduction approach," Housen reiterated the city's position that "activists and protestors" pose a threat to workers during sweeps and that police—who only began are necessary to "ensure that all people onsite, including City workers and encampment residents, are safe."

### **Prioritizing for Sweeps**

In addition to obstructions on sidewalks—the basis of the early "sidewalk strategy"—the mayor's office established criteria for deciding which encampments to remove. During a [recent press event](#), both Housen and Deputy Mayor Tiffany Washington declined to describe any of the criteria in detail, but emphasized that they were "objective"—in other words, "you don't get a higher rank because 20 people called" to complain, Washington said.

An [internal presentation](#) on the prioritization system, distributed in April, but bearing the official date June 21, 2022, says the Unified Care Team prioritizes shootings, fires, and major obstructions, followed by issues like trash; proximity to parks and places where children or elderly people congregate; and places where tents pose a visual obstruction to drivers.

According to Housen, the "scoring system" in the presentation represents "the building blocks for encampment prioritization. The system is currently being tested and frequently refined as we learn more, to ensure the right information is driving decisions."

The King County Regional Homelessness Authority is preparing to release its own set of criteria for prioritizing encampments for outreach and offers of shelter or housing next week, which will differ somewhat from the city's criteria. "We talk about encampment resolution, not removal, and resolution for us is everybody actually came inside," Dones said. "We are not in favor of a displacement-based strategy, and we will engage over whatever period of time is necessary to get everybody into a real placement—not a referral, a placement."

Overall, though, Dones said the Harrell administration's prioritization scheme is about "85 percent consistent with how the authority is going to view prioritization," including the emphasis on violence at encampments. "We agree with that prioritization," Dones said, and "in our work, we have a corresponding section that looks at violence—things like physical assault, potentially nonphysical assault, verbal abuse, etc. between campers, ranging between simple assaults all way up to shots fired, and ranks those things with different weights." Public Defender Association co-director Lisa Dugaard, whose organization has spearheaded several pandemic-era programs aimed at sheltering and stabilizing homeless people who engage in criminal activity, argues that sweeping encampments where violence has occurred merely destabilizes encampment residents without addressing the issues that lead to violence.

For example, Dugaard notes, people often become victims of violence because they're unable to pay their debts. When that happens, "the person's situation is what is generating the violence. When that person and their debts wash up into another location, that location will then be deemed a 'violent location,' so dispersing people just disperses the violence" and exacerbates it.

Even a prioritization scheme that didn't put violence at the top of the list would be "arbitrary," Dugaard added, "because most places where people are living outside are so problematic that they deserve priority. What's at the top is urgent, and what's at the bottom is also urgent." In that situation, "any response is good—as long as what you're responding with is a methodology that doesn't just relocate the issues and cause people to lose their things," like sweeps.

Seattle does not have much of a track record of responding with this kind of methodology; with a few notable exceptions, and increasingly since Harrell took office, the city's primary encampment policy has involved telling people to leave a location after offering them whatever shelter beds happen to be on hand.

	<p>On a typical night, only a handful of beds are available citywide, and an available bed may not be appropriate for a particular person—one reason <a href="#">so few shelter referrals</a> actually result in a person staying in shelter for a single night.</p> <p>Currently, the machinery of encampment removals is in the process of shifting to the Unified Care Team, which the mayor’s office hopes will replace the previous, “siloed” approach. The team, which includes about 60 people working for the parks, human services, utility, and transportation departments, is in charge of removing tents or RVs, cleaning up areas where encampments were located, and ensuring that parks and public spaces are “clean and open for visitors,” according to an internal description of the new team’s responsibilities, obtained through a records request. The team is still evolving, and could continue to grow.</p> <p>According to a memo produced by the mayor’s office for a council presentation in March, the UCT “determines what encampment sites are prioritized by the City and the timelines for those sites being addressed” and coordinates actual encampment removals. The city’s HOPE Team, a group of six Human Service Department employees that does outreach to encampments and assists in sweeps, is the city’s only remaining human services response to homelessness now that the regional homelessness authority is up and running.</p> <p>Meanwhile, the sweeps continue. According to a calendar distributed last month, the city plans to remove at least a dozen encampments and RV sites in July, a number that does not count any of the other encampments that will be removed during the month due to emergent concerns about safety, obstructions, and other issues.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/05 WA indigenous sovereignty in question</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://mynorthwest.com/3549053/tribal-sovereignty-scotus-ruling/">https://mynorthwest.com/3549053/tribal-sovereignty-scotus-ruling/</a>
GIST	<p>In a ruling that could have cascading effects on the indigenous tribes of Washington state, the U.S. Supreme Court has <a href="#">held</a> that the federal government and the states have select, concurrent jurisdiction over Indian country, with dissenters arguing that hundreds of years of legal precedent governing the rule of law on tribal lands have been upended.</p> <p>In 2015, Victor Manuel Castro-Huerta was charged by the State of Oklahoma with child neglect of his Cherokee Indian step-daughter while living in Tulsa. Following a change in federal classification of eastern Oklahoma’s Creek Nation reservation, Castro-Huerta appealed, arguing that only the federal government had the authority to prosecute his case.</p> <p>In a 5-4 ruling on <i>Oklahoma v. Castro-Huerta</i>, majority opinion author Justice Brett Kavanaugh held that a state can prosecute crimes committed by non-Indians against Indians on reservations, writing “as a matter of state sovereignty, a State has jurisdiction over all of its territory, including Indian country.”</p> <p>Authoring the minority opinion, Justice Neil Gorsuch wrote, “Native American Tribes retain their sovereignty unless and until Congress ordains otherwise, referencing legal precedent in which the Supreme Court rejected the state of Georgia and former President Andrew Jackson’s attempt to “flout” state authority over tribal lands as “a show of force.”</p> <p>“Where this Court once stood firm, today it wilts. After the Cherokee’s exile to what became Oklahoma, the federal government promised the Tribe that it would remain forever free from interference from state authorities. Only the Tribe or the federal government could punish crimes by or against tribal members on tribal lands ... Now, the State seeks to claim for itself [that] power.”</p> <p>As for how the ruling will affect Washington state’s tribes, the ruling is colored by <a href="#">Public Law 280</a> which grants the state select authority to prosecute crimes committed on tribal land provided the tribe in question has granted consent. Under Public Law 280, the state’s authority was explicitly delineated, whereas now the state and the federal government have concurrent jurisdiction over tribal land.</p>

	<p>The local impact of Castro-Huerta will be contingent on how the law is implemented in Washington state.</p> <p>“When we all went to bed on Tuesday, the law was one thing. And when we woke up on Wednesday, it was new, and it’s changed the status quo that has been in place in Indian country for hundreds of years,” Anthony Broadman, a partner with Indigenous rights law firm Galanda Broadman, told MyNorthwest.</p> <p>“Nationwide, this is a significant change for tribal sovereignty, because we’ve essentially invited states into another area of criminal jurisdiction.”</p> <p>“Federal Indian law looks at sovereignty as the idea that tribal people can make their own laws and be ruled by their own laws. This decision allows for state encroachment in an area that previously the federal government had filled. Whenever you invite states into areas that they had not previously occupied, it diminishes tribal sovereignty.”</p> <p>Broadman claims that no current cases in Washington will be immediately impacted by the ruling because the Supreme Court’s decision represents such an abrupt heel-turn in indigenous law.</p> <p>“There isn’t a case out there where a state had claimed concurrent jurisdiction ... because until Wednesday, they simply didn’t have concurrent jurisdiction,” Broadman continued.</p> <p>“The way that this case will be tested in Washington would be for ... the state to assert concurrent jurisdiction with the federal government over a particular crime. And if it moves forward with that prosecution, that would be the implementation of Castro ... But the reason why I don’t think we’re there yet is because of Wednesday’s large change.”</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>07/05 A reckoning on Russia influence in Austria</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2022/07/05/austria-russia-infucence/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2022/07/05/austria-russia-infucence/</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>VIENNA — “Polizei!” barked the officers who stormed a third-floor apartment in the Austrian capital, moving to intercept a thickset man standing near a kitchen nook. The suspect — a long-serving official in Austria’s security services — sprang toward his cellphone and tried to break it in two, according to Austrian police reports.</p> <p>The phone data from last year’s raid, along with a laptop, USB sticks and a mother lode of documents, is now proving critical to an explosive case that has gained newfound urgency in the aftermath of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, and it is fueling questions about the extent to which Moscow’s influence came to permeate this European nation.</p> <p>Egisto Ott managed undercover agents in the Austrian domestic security service and also served in Turkey and Italy as an intelligence officer, and he is suspected of having sold state secrets to Russia, as well as providing information on perceived enemies of the Kremlin in the West, according to European security officials and Austrian investigative documents.</p> <p>The still-developing Ott case, security officials say, is one of many internal problems that contributed to last year’s dissolution of Austria’s domestic intelligence agency — the BVT — and has led other European agencies to curtail their links with Vienna or cut it out of intelligence sharing on some matters relating to Russia.</p> <p>The 60-year-old Ott has become emblematic of Russia’s deep penetration of European Union member Austria in politics and industry as well as the intelligence field. Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has accelerated a reckoning on the risks for countries that fall under Moscow’s sway. In ongoing, closed-door hearings, Austrian lawmakers have been probing Russian interference in the intelligence services and contracts that the partly state-owned gas giant OMV had with Russia. Lawmakers also are examining business links that senior Austrian political figures and parties have had with the Kremlin and Russian state-owned companies.</p>

“Russian influence in Austria has to be investigated thoroughly,” said opposition parliament member Stephanie Krisper. “For many years, connections to Moscow permeated our political system. Now, the economic and political dependence on Russia has finally become visible to everyone as a security threat.”

This article is based on hundreds of pages of documents either obtained or reviewed by The Washington Post, as well as on interviews with more than 12 current and former Western officials and other people familiar with the Ott case and related matters. They spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss an ongoing investigation. Ott’s lawyer acknowledged a request from The Post to interview his client but then stopped responding.

European security officials and investigative documents suggest that Ott was forming a plan with other Austrian intelligence officers to reorganize the security services as a new department within the Foreign Ministry.

At the time, the Foreign Ministry was led by Karin Kneissl, a diplomat and academic brought into government by the far-right Freedom Party. A government coalition partner from 2017 to 2019, the Freedom Party established particularly warm ties to the Kremlin, dispatching members on a 2017 official trip to Russian-annexed Crimea. Russia seized the Ukrainian territory in 2014 in a move that the United States and the European Union have refused to recognize, instead imposing economic sanctions on Russia.

Kneissl’s 2018 wedding in Austrian wine country became the most visible symbol of the political elite’s embrace of Russia. The guest list was a who’s who of Austrian politics — including former chancellor Sebastian Kurz. The star guest, however, was Russian President Vladimir Putin. During the festivities, Kneissl waltzed with Putin and was photographed curtsying to the Russian leader as he kissed her hand.

There is no indication in the investigative documents that Kneissl was aware of the reorganization plan, which was not realized. In WhatsApp text messages to a Washington Post reporter, Kneissl said she was “not giving interviews” and had emigrated from Austria because of “death threats.” She said she had no knowledge of the plan and had “never heard of Mr. Ott.”

Jailed for three weeks last year, Ott was released and suspended from his job pending further investigation. He has publicly denied all allegations, claiming a conspiracy against him for being a whistleblower who decried department excesses and requests from “friendly” foreign intelligence agencies that he said were “illegal.” He has challenged the official account of the raid of his Vienna apartment, claiming that officers did not announce themselves as police and that he initially resisted because he mistook them for robbers. This year, a court upheld his claim that excessive force had been used during his arrest.

“They are accusing me of giving out state secrets to Russia, but I haven’t,” Ott told ZackZack, an Austrian website. He added, “They have seen too much TV.”

### **Too much trust in Russia**

If some nations in Europe — especially Poland and the Baltic states — viewed Russia under Putin as a strategic threat, Austria was among those that instead saw Moscow as a golden opportunity.

Partitioned after World War II into sectors occupied by the Soviets, Americans, British and French, Austria moved into the mid-1950s as an officially “neutral” nation. That neutrality — including legal codes that made espionage a crime only if directed at Austria — turned its graceful capital into a haunt for spies, a status that was accentuated by its hosting of international bodies including the International Atomic Energy Agency.

In the 2000s, the rise of a strongman — Putin — in the Kremlin was seen in pragmatic terms in Austria. Russia ranks among this nation’s top foreign investors. At the end of 2021, Russian companies held \$25.5 billion worth of assets in the country, including a major hub for Moscow’s all-important European natural gas exports. Austria became a major investor in the Nord Stream 2 pipeline that would have doubled the

flow of Russian natural gas into Europe, but Nord Stream 2 was scrapped after Russia's invasion of Ukraine despite initial Austrian resistance to jettisoning the project.

A revolving door opened between the highest ranks of the Austrian government and major Russian state companies. Two years after leaving government, Kneissl, for instance, took a highly paid position on the board of the Russian state energy giant Rosneft. She additionally wrote opinion columns for RT, a Kremlin propaganda outlet.

Former Austrian chancellor Christian Kern was on the board of Russian Railways. Wolfgang Schüssel, another former chancellor of Austria, was on the board of Lukoil, another Russian energy giant.

Kern and Schüssel both resigned from their positions after Russia's Feb. 24 invasion of Ukraine. Kneissl resigned her post with Rosneft in May.

Some of Austria's major companies also became deeply entwined with Russia, particularly in its energy sector. In 2015, OMV, an Austrian energy firm partly owned by the government and currently the country's second largest company, hired a new chief executive, Rainer Seele, a German national. In his previous position, with Wintershall Holding, a German crude oil and natural gas producer, Seele had worked with Gazprom, the Russian natural gas behemoth, and was a strong supporter of the Nord Stream pipeline.

In June, OMV's supervisory board announced an internal inquiry into Seele's tenure, specifically looking into contracts that made Austria increasingly dependent on Russian natural gas, as well as a \$20 million sponsorship deal with Zenit St. Petersburg — a soccer club said to be Putin's favorite. Seele, who stepped down from OMV last year, has denied any wrongdoing.

On June 15 — less than two weeks after the investigation was announced — Gazprom informed the company that the volume of gas delivered to Austria would be cut.

"Looking back, we have to conclude that the investments made in Russia after 2015 were based on too much trust in Russia and Russia's role in the international community," Mark Garrett, the chairman of OMV's supervisory board, told shareholders in June.

### **Under suspicion**

From 2017 to 2021, Ott is alleged to have been cooperating with a former senior Austrian intelligence official, Martin Weiss, as well as Jan Marsalek, 42, an Austrian businessman wanted in Germany and believed to be in hiding in Russia, according to security officials and investigative documents.

Weiss admitted to passing on requests for searches for background information, including personal data, on names he would submit to Ott on behalf of Marsalek. The requests contained up to 25 names at a time. Before he fled, Marsalek served as chief operating officer of Wirecard, a secretive financial processing firm. In 2019, stories in the Financial Times documented fraud and fictitious reserves at the company, which was declared insolvent in 2020.

German officials are probing possible links between Marsalek and Russian intelligence, including the question of whether Wirecard may have been used for Russian money laundering operations, or whether its client list — which included people who used the secretive service to pay for pornography, according to European security officials — could have proved useful to Moscow.

A European security official said that Marsalek — who disappeared after taking a private flight from Austria to Belarus in June 2020 — resided for a time in a Moscow apartment complex controlled by one of Russia's intelligence agencies. That official also said Marsalek has been provided with a new Russian identity.

Lawyers for Weiss and Marsalek did not respond to interview requests.

Security officials said that Ott had been under suspicion for years before his arrest last year but that Austrian authorities were never able to bring a prosecution. As early as Nov. 22, 2017, he was stopped by police at Vienna International Airport as he arrived to board a flight to Amsterdam. Austrian officials had been warned by the CIA 10 months earlier that Ott was suspected of selling information to the Russians. The Americans renewed their warning that November and threatened to pull out of a security conference in the Netherlands if Ott was allowed to attend, according to the European security officials.

The American warnings were first reported by Austria's Die Presse. The CIA declined to comment.

The CIA ultimatum led the Austrians to obtain a search warrant for Ott's 3,200-square-foot home in the emerald hills of the Austrian south on the grounds of "suspicion of giving up state secrets."

The search, however, failed to uncover key evidence, according to Austrian officials. The intelligence agency nonetheless sought to suspend him pending further investigation, but an administrative court for civil servants blocked that action. The Austrian authorities then reassigned Ott to work in a police academy, where he was supposed no longer to have access to Western intelligence databases.

Officials, however, believe Ott used his new posting to tap a network of intelligence contacts inside and outside Austria. Telling colleagues at other agencies that he was conducting official business as part of his new job, Ott requested hundreds of illegal searches in secure databases for information on people across the continent, according to the investigative documents.

In one instance, according to European officials, Ott allegedly sought information from British intelligence that could have been used to determine whether a woman previously accused of being a Russian spy was still on the radar of Western security services.

Among the queries that stood out was one he allegedly conducted in December 2020 into Christo Grozev, the executive director of the investigative outlet Bellingcat, the documents show. The outlet's reporting had uncovered the true identity of Vadim Krasikov, the Russian national who was convicted last year of gunning down a Chechen opposition figure in Berlin in 2019 after Krasikov entered Germany on a false passport. The German authorities said Krasikov was operating on behalf of Russia's state security agency, the FSB.

Asked by The Post whether he had knowledge of Ott's searches, including for his home address, Grozev said he had been informed by authorities and had concluded they were done on behalf of Russia. "It could just be intimidation, it could just be keeping an eye on me, tailing me, or preparing an assassination," he said.

In addition, a three-page analysis was discovered on Ott's cellular phone that appeared to assess the shortcomings of the Russian operation in Berlin and offer recommendations on how Russian intelligence could do better in the future. The analysis, which Western officials believe was written by Ott, suggested a mole or defector might have provided information that compromised the plan after Krasikov failed to escape undetected.

"Immediately stop all planned operations until the mole or defector has been eliminated," the document warned.

What comes next in the Ott case is unclear. Current and former security officials outside Austria remain skeptical that the various parliamentary and other investigations will probe deeply enough.

"These are things the Austrian government needs to question and get to the bottom of, but I personally don't know whether the Austrians will go that far," said Sonya Seunghye Lim, a former CIA station chief in Europe. "I think their attitude for decades, going back to the '40s and '50s, has always been that they'd rather not uncover uncomfortable truths."



HEADLINE	07/05 Behavioral issues, absenteeism at schools
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2022/07/05/absenteeism-behavioral-issues-pandemic-data/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2022/07/05/absenteeism-behavioral-issues-pandemic-data/</a>
GIST	<p>More than 80 percent of public schools reported that the pandemic has taken a toll on student behavior and social-emotional development, while nearly as many schools say they need more mental health support, according to federal data released Wednesday.</p> <p>The data, collected as the 2021-2022 school year was winding down, also showed that more than 70 percent of schools saw increases in chronic student absenteeism since the onset of the pandemic and about half of schools reported increased acts of disrespect toward teachers and staff.</p> <p>“The survey paints a remarkably coherent picture,” said Kevin Welner, a professor at the University of Colorado at Boulder and director of the National Education Policy Center. “The general trend is still showing pandemic-related harm to students and their teachers.”</p> <p>The findings by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), based on responses from leaders at 846 public schools, underline problems that have become increasingly well known during more than two years of pandemic-altered education.</p> <p>But the magnitude of problems related to behavior and well-being is troubling, said Constance A. Lindsay, an assistant professor of educational leadership at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Schools could be scrambling in the fall, she said, expecting that “our most disadvantaged students have been hit the hardest.”</p> <p>Compared with a typical year before the pandemic, 56 percent of schools reported a rise in classroom disruptions because of student misconduct in 2021-2022. Nearly half of schools pointed to increases in out-of-classroom rowdiness, with 46 percent of schools reporting more fighting and threats of physical attacks between students, according to the NCES data.</p> <p>Those numbers follow a federal <a href="#">report</a> issued last week showing that schools reported an increase in verbal abuse and teacher disrespect during the decade that ended in spring 2020. That report also examined <a href="#">the surge in school shootings</a>.</p> <p>Teachers union leaders have said findings about student behavior reflect a rise both in reporting and in problems. Schools continue to lack sufficient staffing, training and student supports, Cheryl Bost, president of the Maryland State Education Association, the state’s largest teachers union, said in a recent interview.</p> <p>Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers, predicted increases for the pandemic period, which she linked to the country’s culture wars and angry politics, intensified by social media. The toxic discourse filters into the classroom, she said, emphasizing the need for more guidance counselors, social workers and wraparound services.</p> <p>Schools were clear about the need: Nearly 80 percent would like more mental health support for students or staff, while 70 percent of schools said more training is required to support students’ social-emotional development.</p> <p>“What that tells you is the sort of depth and breadth of the need,” said Scott Gest, an education professor at the University of Virginia. “Part of what was striking to me in looking at the results is that these basic concerns and covid impacts are largely seen across all levels of schooling, across all regions, across different kinds of school demographics.”</p> <p>Chronic absenteeism was explored in detail, with nearly 40 percent of schools saying it had increased even since the 2020-2021 pandemic-altered school year. Schools in cities — or with higher levels of students in poverty or students of color — reported greater percentages of chronic absenteeism in 2021-2022.</p>

	<p>Teacher absences stood out, too. Nearly half of schools said teacher absences climbed from a year earlier. Adding to the strain is a shortage of substitute teachers. More than three-quarters of schools said it was harder to get a substitute in 2021-2022 than it was before the pandemic hit.</p> <p>When substitutes can't be found, most schools said classes are covered by administrators, nonteaching staff or other teachers using their planning periods. Only 1 percent of schools reported always being able to find substitute teachers.</p> <p>The data was released by the NCES, the statistical arm of the Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences. The data set was described by NCES as "experimental," in that it uses new sources or methodologies, but reliable.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/06 Sri Lanka is epicenter of global crisis</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/07/06/sri-lanka-global-crisis-economic-ukraine-russia/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/07/06/sri-lanka-global-crisis-economic-ukraine-russia/</a>
GIST	<p><b>The war in Ukraine may still dominate international headlines.</b> But it's a country far from the battlefield that has turned into a kind of crucible of the global moment. For months, Sri Lanka has been in an economic death spiral: A public debt crisis, exacerbated first by the toll of the pandemic and then the disruptions provoked by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, has led to shortages in food, fuel, cooking gas, medicines, cash and other essential commodities.</p> <p>In a United Nations survey, some 70 percent of Sri Lankan households reported <a href="#">cutting back on food consumption</a>, with food price inflation running at around 57 percent (contrast that <a href="#">to roughly 10 percent</a> in the United States from the previous year). The country of 22 million people is <a href="#">more or less out of fuel</a> and fresh shipments are still days away.</p> <p>Mounting public anger and protests brought down <a href="#">the government of Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa</a> in May, but crisis conditions endure and fears grow over the potential of new clashes between security forces and ordinary, irate civilians. Rolling power cuts are now standard parts of daily life, as are <a href="#">days-long lines for fuel</a>. Schools and offices have been closed at least through the week in a bid to keep Sri Lankans off the roads.</p> <p>Last week, doctors, medical staff, teachers and bankers in the capital Colombo marched in protest of their inability to get the necessary petrol or diesel to carry out essential work. "Things have become unbearable for the common man," said a teachers union official <a href="#">to Reuters</a>.</p> <p><b>Sri Lanka in May <a href="#">defaulted on its debt</a> for the first time in its history as an independent nation.</b> A caretaker government led by savvy veteran politician Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe is attempting to steer the country out of its troubles, including by soliciting aid from regional powers India and China.</p> <p>But the road ahead remains bleak for a country unable to pay for its imports. The government has resorted to rather desperate appeals: It introduced a scheme to give government employees an extra day off <a href="#">to grow crops in their backyards</a> and also offered all of the nation's 1.5 million public sector workers the possibility of <a href="#">taking five years unpaid leave</a> so they could find employment abroad, emigrate and send much-needed remittances home.</p> <p>Lines at passport offices are now lengthy, too, and the country's online application system has been <a href="#">backlogged for months</a>. The most desperate are attempting to <a href="#">flee via boat</a> to nearby countries such as India. Analysts have likened the wipeout of the Sri Lankan economy to <a href="#">the financial chaos of the late 1990s</a> in Southeast Asia's major economies. Others warn of Sri Lanka turning into "<a href="#">South Asia's Lebanon</a>," debt-ridden and dysfunctional.</p> <p>Ten days of negotiations that began June 20 between the country's interim government and officials from the International Monetary Fund over a potential bailout package concluded last week <a href="#">with no resolution</a>. "In the past, we have held discussions as a developing country," Wickremesinghe <a href="#">said Tuesday</a>. "But now</p>

the situation is different. We are now participating in the negotiations as a bankrupt country. Therefore, we have to face a more difficult and complicated situation.”

**Sri Lanka’s problems are, in many aspects, unique to its situation and [self-inflicted](#).** Yet the astonishing collapse of the country is also inextricably linked to a wider, interlocking series of global phenomena: The war in Ukraine has spiked global food and energy prices and pushed a tough situation in Sri Lanka over the edge.

“Sri Lanka would be in crisis even if you didn’t have a war in Ukraine, but it’s compounding everything,” Alan Keenan, an analyst at the International Crisis Group consultancy, said [to my colleague Gerry Shih earlier this year](#). “This is the Ukraine effect: a credit line for fuel you thought could last two months now lasts one. Even if you get a bailout, you’re buying less food, less fuel, less medicine.”

Similar pressures exist elsewhere. A [joint report](#) from international humanitarian groups Oxfam and Save the Children in May found that one person is dying of hunger every 48 seconds in drought-ravaged Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia. The conflict in Ukraine had led to prices spiking to record levels and made food “unattainable for millions” of people in East Africa.

“The number of people experiencing extreme hunger in the three countries has more than doubled since last year — from over 10 million to more than 23 million today,” the organizations [noted in a statement](#).

“This is against a backdrop of crippling debt that more than tripled in under a decade — from \$20.7 billion in 2012 to \$65.3 billion by 2020 — sucking these countries’ resources from public services and social protection.”

The organizations also cajoled major Western powers for not doing more: “[Group of Seven nations] and other rich nations have turned inwards in response to various global crises, such as COVID-19 and more recently the Ukraine conflict, including by backtracking on their promised aid to poor countries and driving them to edge of bankruptcy with debt.”

**Indeed, for the United States and many of its European partners rallying around Ukraine, Sri Lanka is far from their focus.** But leaders elsewhere are more concerned. Indonesian President Joko Widodo is said to have carried out his trip [last week to both Kyiv and Moscow](#) with the situation in Sri Lanka front of mind. He urged an end to hostilities and pressed Russian President Vladimir Putin to ease conditions that have placed [a chokehold on crucial exports](#) of grain and fertilizer.

“Indonesia’s top goal is ... for the war to end in Ukraine,” Andrew Mantong, international relations researcher at the Jakarta-based Center for Strategic and International Studies, [told Nikkei Asia](#). “If that can’t be achieved, the second goal — and the most achievable — is to find a way for Russian and Ukrainian food and fertilizer supplies to be reintegrated into the global supply chain.”

In [an interview with the Associated Press last month](#), a beleaguered Wickremesinghe said his government would consider sourcing Russian oil, no matter Western sanctions. He bemoaned how the war in Ukraine had accelerated Sri Lanka’s “economic contraction” and warned his nation would not be alone.

“I think by the end of the year, you could see the impact in other countries,” he said. “There is a global shortage of food. Countries are not exporting food.”

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HEADLINE	07/06 Climate activists to disrupt baseball game
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-vi/2022/07/06/congressional-baseball-game-climate-protest/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-vi/2022/07/06/congressional-baseball-game-climate-protest/</a>
GIST	The <a href="#">Congressional Baseball Game</a> has long been trumpeted as an annual ritual of bipartisan comity. Since 1909, House Democrats and Republicans have faced off on the diamond to show that despite their differences, they can all enjoy a night under the lights in D.C. competing in America’s pastime.

Climate activists say the time for such games is over.

Members of several climate advocacy organizations are planning to disrupt this year's game, scheduled for July 28, unless Democrats pass a climate bill through reconciliation. The legislation was in President Biden's Build Back Better plan, which promised [\\$555 billion](#) in investments to address climate change.

The activists say they do not believe the whole package will pass the Senate, so they're advocating to separate the climate portion into its own bill.

"We refuse to watch a member of Congress play baseball while the world burns," said Jamie DeMarco, federal policy director for Chesapeake Climate Action Network.

The action, dubbed "Now or Never," will be announced Wednesday morning and is being organized by groups who feel disillusioned by their canvassing and outreach work in the 2020 elections, which gave Democrats control of the presidency and both chambers of Congress. Organizers are keeping details under wraps for now but say there will be a component of direct action for activists who are willing to risk arrest.

"What we want to make sure is if somebody fails, they're held accountable," Demarco said Tuesday, noting that two of the sponsors of this year's game include oil companies BP and Chevron. "Either you deliver on your promise on climate or voters will hold you accountable."

DeMarco and activist Michael Greenberg say that unless a bill is passed, this is just the first step in a series of planned actions that will take place, including in midterm-election battleground states such as Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.

"This is not just a D.C. action," DeMarco said. "This is a D.C. action showing Congress the energy that we're going to show up with in their districts. When people see their neighbors taking dramatic risks of their own well-being, they may think, 'Wow, this really matters,' and that Democrats haven't delivered on their promises."

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HEADLINE	07/05 Central, Southwest to swelter in heat dome
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2022/07/05/heat-dome-central-southwest-plains/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2022/07/05/heat-dome-central-southwest-plains/</a>
GIST	<p>The weather pattern from late May to late June was dominated by a relentless heat dome that brought record temperatures everywhere except the northwest and northeast United States. After a bit of a pause, the heat dome is back. It's settling over the Midwest and Plains and is forecast to gradually shift westward in coming days.</p> <p>The heat dome could linger in the Southwest for well over a week, meaning a prolonged period of above-normal midsummer temperatures from Texas, which experienced widespread record heat in June, through Phoenix and Las Vegas.</p> <p>On Tuesday, heat advisories and excessive-heat warnings covered a sprawling zone from northern Louisiana to southern Minnesota and Wisconsin, affecting over 60 million people. Temperatures 10 to 15 degrees above normal are affecting much of this zone, with highs in the 90s and triple digits.</p> <p>The core of the heat — with high temperatures from 100 to 105 degrees — is affecting the zone from northern Texas and Arkansas through Kansas and Missouri, including Kansas City, St. Louis, Oklahoma City, Dallas and Little Rock.</p> <p>Temperatures won't hit records in most of these cities, but the combination of elevated temperatures and tropical humidity in the air poses a danger to vulnerable populations, including older adults, outdoor workers and anyone without access to air conditioning.</p>

“Heat related illnesses increase significantly during extreme heat and high humidity events,” wrote the National Weather Service office in St. Louis, where it could feel as hot as 110 degrees factoring in the humidity.

Daytime highs in the St. Louis metro area will crest at around 100 degrees each day through Thursday, but the nighttime lows are equally problematic. Temperatures aren’t expected to dip below 80 degrees Tuesday night and 79 degrees on Wednesday night. That lack of a real nocturnal cool-down prevents the human body from “resetting” after a day of hot weather, compounding heat stress.

Lower-income households — those that often have other vulnerabilities at play during heat events — are disproportionately likely to be without access to adequate cooling.

It will be the same story in Little Rock, where a heat advisory is in effect Tuesday and where every day through Friday should see highs within a degree either side of 100. Overnight lows will bottom out around 80.

“If you can, check up on those who may be more vulnerable or are without some form of [air conditioning],” the Weather Service in Little Rock wrote in an online discussion. “The other hazard of note [will] be overnight low temps, as we [will likely] see a few consecutive nights with temperatures only falling into the upper 70s, or even low 80s, and not allowing for any overnight relief.”

By late in the workweek, dew points — a measure of how much moisture is in the air — will lurch into the mid-70s, combining with the blistering temperatures to lead to stifling heat indexes of 110 to 115 degrees during the day.

In Dallas, every day, essentially until further notice, temperatures will feature highs in the 100-to-105-degree range and nights in the 80-to-84-degree range.

“A [Heat Advisory](#) will [likely](#) be needed across North & Central Texas Wednesday,” wrote the Weather Service office in Fort Worth.

The toasty temperatures in Texas come after the hottest May-June period on record in Houston, Austin and San Antonio — not to mention cities outside the Lone Star State, including New Orleans, Shreveport, Atlanta, Tampa and Orlando. That figure largely stems from extreme readings associated with the previous heat dome.

### **Heat to scorch Southwest**

The heat broiling the central states is just the start, however. Over the coming week, the heat dome will move west, backtracking before putting it in park over the Four Corners region and potentially remaining anchored until at least mid- to late July.

Heat domes are composed of high-pressure systems. That translates to sinking, drying air and hot temperatures in the summertime. The high acts as a force field of sorts too, diverting jet stream energy and disturbances to the north and fending off widespread inclement weather.

While the heat may not challenge many records, it will be notable for its persistence. Phoenix will be as hot as ever, with highs above 110 degrees this weekend as the heat dome arrives. Las Vegas will see highs climb from the upper 90s to around 107.

Unlike the heat dome in June, this one will arrive at the wettest time of year across the Southwest. The monsoon looks to continue in full force, unimpeded by the stagnant ridge of high pressure that will remain parked over the region.

The addition of humidity from the monsoon has already been noteworthy over the Southwest. In Albuquerque, dew points have been running in the lower- to mid-50s, compared with an average in the

	<p>lower- to mid-40s. As the clockwise-spinning heat dome continues to work west, it will entrain a tongue of additional moisture and continue to draw it north over the Southwest and Four Corners.</p> <p>Most of the week will feature isolated-to-scattered heavy monsoonal downpours over the Southwest, and since the heat dome has diverted any upper-level winds around it, odds are the downpours will be especially slow-moving. That could cause isolated flood concerns, particularly over any burn scars left by wildfires in recent years.</p> <p>Fortunately, most places in the Southwest desperately need the rainfall. A whopping 58 percent of New Mexico is under “severe” or top-tier “exceptional” drought, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor, and the monsoon presents a glimmer of hope in finally making a dent in the deficit.</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>07/05 Oil prices fall as recession worries grow</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2022/07/05/dow-falls-500-points-worries-grow-over-slowng-economic-growth/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2022/07/05/dow-falls-500-points-worries-grow-over-slowng-economic-growth/</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>The end of the Fourth of July weekend arrived with a blast of troubling economic developments as bonds flashed signs of a coming recession and oil prices plunged, suggesting that millions of consumers who have spent more than a year rocked by rising prices could face even more upheaval.</p> <p>Tuesday’s events suggest that gasoline prices could be poised for a sharp descent, though there could be a multiweek lag. While the U.S. average has pulled back from its June peak above \$5 a gallon, further declines might not be of much consolation to consumers because they could run into an economic downturn that further pressures stocks and could spill into the labor market.</p> <p>The surging cost of commodities has played a major factor in rising prices, with the gas pump perhaps been the most frequent reminder of inflation’s squeeze for many Americans. The national average stood at \$4.80 on Tuesday, according to AAA data, or roughly 50 percent more than last year.</p> <p>Oil prices soared this spring on fears that the Russian invasion of Ukraine would lead to supply shortages and global disruptions. They continued to climb after the European Union moved to cut off Russian crude, as part of a sweeping array of sanctions to isolate President Vladimir Putin and punish his allies in Moscow and abroad.</p> <p>But Tuesday, oil prices fell sharply, moving below \$100 a barrel for the first time since May. For motorists, the sudden plunge is double-edged: If oil stays below \$100, gasoline could fall as much as 40 to 60 cents, according to Patrick De Haan, chief of petroleum analysis for GasBuddy.</p> <p>It will take weeks for such a drop to be realized at the gas station and, even then, some other geopolitical event could send oil prices spiraling back up. More concerning to analysts is that oil prices are falling because of grim economic projections, serving as sort of a canary in the coal mine for declining economic activity across the board.</p> <p>There already are signs of a pullback: U.S. demand for gasoline, measured as a four-week moving average, dropped to 8.93 million barrels per day as of June 24, a decline of 2.6 percent compared with a year ago, according to the Energy Information Administration.</p> <p>“While no one is wishing for a recession, the fact of the matter is that economic slowdown is one of only two ways to meaningfully bring down oil prices from current levels,” said Pavel Molchanov, director and equity research analyst at Raymond James, an investment bank and financial services company.</p> <p>On Wall Street, meanwhile, investors attempted to regroup after stocks closed out their worst six-month stretch to start a year since 1970 in the face of historically high inflation, rising interest rates and global supply chain disruptions brought on by the Russian war and the coronavirus pandemic.</p>



More than \$8 trillion has evaporated from the stock market this year.

Changing monetary policy has fueled much of Wall Street's decline this year: The Federal Reserve has raised its benchmark interest rate three times in 2022 and signaled that four more increases are on deck. The most recent hike, in June, came in at three-quarters of a percentage point, the Fed's largest since 1994.

On Tuesday, the Dow Jones Industrial closed down more than 129 points or 0.4 percent, after staging a comeback from deep losses. The S&P 500 index ticked up 0.2 percent, while the tech-heavy Nasdaq swelled nearly 1.8 percent.

Energy companies got pummeled after oil prices plunged — West Texas Intermediate crude, the U.S. benchmark, slumped more than 8 percent to \$99.70 a barrel, while its global equivalent, Brent crude, fell 9.2 percent, to trade near \$103. Shares of ConocoPhillips and Marathon Oil Corp slid by more than 6 percent, Halliburton fell by 8 percent, while Occidental Petroleum Corp. decreased by 2.2 percent at the closing bell.

Lindsey Bell, Ally's chief markets and money strategist, said in an email on Tuesday the big unknown is how deep or widespread the stock market slowdown will be. "With a 20% decline in the first half of the year, stocks are pricing in what could be a mild to medium sized recession," she said.

The bond market is also indicating tough times ahead. The price of short-term debt was suddenly more expensive on Tuesday than longer-term debt, an unusual occurrence that tends to happen when investors are bracing for a recession.

Economists also will be closely tracking corporate earnings this week. Eighteen companies in the S&P 500 will release quarterly results in the days ahead, providing crucial data into how businesses are coping with rising prices and borrowing costs.

The outlook executive teams offer for the next quarter will be especially useful, Nick Raich, chief executive of the Earnings Scout, an independent macroeconomic research firm, said in an email Tuesday.

Investors are also monitoring geopolitical events. Secretary of State Antony Blinken will meet with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi this week, according to senior State Department officials, as the Biden administration weighs lifting tariffs on China to dampen inflation. But officials appear to be conflicted on what path to pursue, as inflation soars to 8.6 percent.

Treasury Secretary Janet L. Yellen has told lawmakers that some of the Trump-era tariffs were strategically questionable and "paid by Americans, not by the Chinese." But U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai has voiced a conflicting view to Congress, saying, "The China tariffs are ... a significant piece of leverage, and a trade negotiator never walks away from leverage."

Investors, meanwhile, are pulling back on the belief that the potential rollbacks of the tariffs on Chinese goods may not materialize, said Ally's Bell.

As world leaders grapple with ongoing financial tensions, American consumers have become increasingly less confident about the economy, with consumer sentiment measures plunging to record lows.

Despite the souring sentiment, however, American consumers continue to shell out for goods and services, in what has shown to be a bright spot for the U.S. economy. But economists say there are signs that is beginning to change, as consumers feel the effects of higher interest rates and dip into their savings to keep their household budgets afloat.

	<p>The broad deterioration in consumer sentiment “may be a sign that consumers intend to pull back from spending amid increasing fear of a more challenging economic environment on the horizon,” according to a new research note by the investment management firm Glenmede.</p> <p>The upcoming labor market figures this Friday also loom large for economists and political leaders. In recent months, low unemployment has proved to be a resilient pillar of the domestic economy. But the Fed’s aggressive moves to raise interest rates could spur job losses.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/05 Experts: stopping BA.5 could be difficult</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://time.com/6193890/ba-5-omicron-dominant/">https://time.com/6193890/ba-5-omicron-dominant/</a>
GIST	<p>Around the world, the latest Omicron subvariant, <a href="#">BA.5</a>, is quickly becoming the dominant strain of the SARS-CoV-2 virus. It just took the top spot in the U.S.: As of the last week of June, BA.5 made up <a href="#">more than half</a> of all new COVID-19 cases, according to new estimates from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). That’s up 10 percentage points compared to the prior week.</p> <p>For several reasons—including a lack of protective mandates and mutations in the virus—BA.5 may now be tricky to get under control.</p> <p>The power of BA.5 (and its sibling <a href="#">BA.4</a>, which makes up about 16% of new U.S. cases, has the same spike protein mutation as BA.5, but doesn’t seem to spread as quickly) is its ability to infect, and reinfect, almost anyone. This highly contagious strain can evade people’s built-up immunity, whether from vaccination or previous infection.</p> <p>As <a href="#">Nature</a> reports, lab studies show that even people who have so-called “hybrid immunity” from vaccination and a past infection with the Omicron BA.1 strain are less able to ward off reinfection from either the BA.4 or BA.5 strains.</p> <p>Experts believe this is due largely to changes in the virus’ spike proteins. Current COVID-19 vaccines and boosters target the original strain of the virus rather than any of the variants, so being vaccinated doesn’t offer as much protection as it once did against infection. (Luckily, the <a href="#">vaccines still confer broad protection</a> against the worst outcomes of the disease.)</p> <p>Since BA.4 and BA.5 have taken over, “we have seen some cases of reinfection,” Dr. Wesley Long, an experimental pathologist at Houston Methodist Hospital, <a href="#">told CNN</a>, “and I have seen some cases of reinfection with people who had a BA.2 variant in the last few months.”</p> <p>Combine the virus’ greater transmissibility and more immune evasion with fewer protective mandates across the country, and the threat of infection is high. Conditions are also ripe for new variants to emerge, since the risk of mutations increases the more the virus spreads. On top of this, <a href="#">recent research</a> (which has yet to be peer reviewed) found that people who had been reinfected with COVID-19 had a higher risk of hospitalization and death than people who had just been infected once. They were also more likely to develop new and lasting health issues, including lung and heart problems, fatigue, digestive and kidney disorders, diabetes, and neurologic problems.</p> <p>Vaccine manufacturers are trying to keep up with the virus. On June 30, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) <a href="#">said</a> that new booster shots for the fall <a href="#">must target BA.4 and BA.5</a>. But while companies are developing new vaccines to specifically address Omicron, it’s still unclear how effective they will be in tackling the more recent subvariants, or, if the virus keeps evolving so rapidly, whether anything developed now will be outdated by the time it’s available.</p> <p>The hopeful news is that from what <a href="#">experts</a> can tell so far, the BA.5 variant <a href="#">isn’t causing</a> a more severe form of infection (although scientists are still gathering more data on this), the reported symptoms haven’t changed much, and death and hospitalization rates in the U.S. are lower than they were during the winter</p>

	<p>Omicron wave. (This could change, however, as there appears to be a slight recent uptick in hospitalizations, <a href="#">according to the CDC</a>.)</p> <p>In the meantime, experts <a href="#">recommend</a> that people over 50 not delay getting their boosters, since the risk of infection right now is high.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/06 Day 133 of the Russia invasion</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jul/06/russia-ukraine-war-what-we-know-on-day-133-of-the-invasion">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jul/06/russia-ukraine-war-what-we-know-on-day-133-of-the-invasion</a>
GIST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>At least two people have been killed and seven injured after “massive shelling” <a href="#">pumelled the eastern Ukrainian city of Sloviansk</a>, officials say.</b> City mayor, Vadim Lyakh, called on residents to evacuate after Russian forces struck a market and a residential area. Ukraine earlier <a href="#">retreated from Lysychansk</a>, prompting <a href="#">speculation that Russia would now focus on Sloviansk and Kramatorsk</a> to the south, the two main cities in Donetsk still held by Ukraine.</li> <li>• <b>The governor of Donetsk has urged 350,000 civilians to evacuate as Russian troops escalate their offensive in the region.</b> “The destiny of the whole country will be decided by the Donetsk region,” Pavlo Kyrylenko told reporters. “Once there are less people, we will be able to concentrate more on our enemy and perform our main tasks.”</li> <li>• <b>Ukrainian forces have taken up new defensive lines in Donetsk, where they still control major cities, and plan to launch counter-offensives in the south of the country.</b> The Luhansk governor, Serhiy Haidai, said the weeks-long battle for Lysychansk had drawn in Russian troops that could have been fighting on other fronts, and had given Ukraine’s forces <a href="#">time to build fortifications in the Donetsk region</a> to make it “harder for the Russians there”.</li> <li>• <b>Russian-backed separatists have seized two foreign-flagged ships in the Russian-occupied port city of Mariupol and claimed they are “state property”.</b> The self-proclaimed Donetsk People’s Republic (DPR) <a href="#">informed two shipping companies that their vessels were the subject of “forcible appropriation</a> of movable property with forced conversion into state property”.</li> <li>• <b>A Russian-flagged ship carrying thousands of tonnes of grain is being <a href="#">held and investigated by Turkish authorities</a> over claims its cargo was stolen from Ukraine.</b> Turkish customs officials acted after <a href="#">Kyiv claimed the Zhibek Zholy was illegally transporting 7,000 tonnes of grain out of Russian-occupied Berdiansk</a>, a Ukrainian port in the south-east of the country.</li> <li>• <b>Ukraine has asked Turkey to investigate <a href="#">three additional Russian ships</a> that it alleges transported stolen grain.</b> A 13 June letter seen by Reuters revealed that the Ukrainian prosecutor general’s office asked Turkey’s ministry of justice to investigate and provide evidence on three ships that it believes to have allegedly transported stolen grain from occupied Ukrainian territories such as Kherson.</li> <li>• <b>The head of the Russian-imposed administration of the occupied Zaporizhzhia region of Ukraine, Yevgeny Balitsky, has said the region plans to sell Ukraine’s grain to the Middle East. <a href="#">The main countries involved in the deal were Iraq, Iran and Saudi Arabia</a>.</b> Ukraine has repeatedly accused Russia of stealing grain, a charge that Moscow has denied.</li> <li>• <b>Russia is planning to launch a railway link between Rostov region and the areas of Donetsk and Luhansk it occupies in eastern Ukraine, Russian state media reports.</b> Building transport links has also been a <a href="#">priority for the Russian occupiers between Crimea</a>, which it annexed in 2014, and the areas of Kherson which it occupies.</li> <li>• <b>The 30 Nato member countries have signed accession protocols for Finland and Sweden,</b> sending the membership bids of the two Nordic countries to allied parliaments for approval. Nato’s secretary general, Jens Stoltenberg, urged allies to swiftly ratify and <a href="#">assured the two countries of the alliance’s support</a> in the meantime. Canada became the first country to formally ratify Finland and Sweden’s accession.</li> <li>• <b>The UN has documented 270 cases of “arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance” of civilians in parts of Ukraine held by Russian and Russian-backed forces, according to the UN’s human rights chief, Michelle Bachelet.</b> In a speech at the same session at the UN’s human rights council, Ukraine’s deputy foreign minister, <a href="#">Emine Dzhaparova accused Russia of kidnappings on a “massive” scale</a>.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Latvia will reinstate compulsory military service</b>, its defence minister, Artis Pabriks, announced on Tuesday following growing tension with neighbouring Russia amid Moscow's war in <a href="#">Ukraine</a>.</li> </ul>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/05 Turkey seizes Russian ship; 'stolen' grain</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jul/05/ukraine-russia-turkey-ship-grain-stolen">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jul/05/ukraine-russia-turkey-ship-grain-stolen</a>
GIST	<p>A Russian-flagged ship carrying thousands of tonnes of grain is being held and investigated by Turkish authorities in the Black Sea port of Karasu over claims its cargo was stolen from Ukraine.</p> <p>Turkish customs officials acted after Kyiv claimed the Zhibek Zholy was illegally transporting 7,000 tonnes of grain out of Russian-occupied Berdiansk, a Ukrainian port in the south-east of the country.</p> <p>Officials in Karasu said the ship was waiting off port while inquiries were undertaken into the provenance of the shipment.</p> <p>Russia's foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov, confirmed that the ship was Russian-flagged, but appeared to muddy the waters while claiming the Kremlin was seeking clarity on Monday.</p> <p>"The ship really is Russian-flagged, but I think it belongs to Kazakhstan and the cargo was being carried on a contract between Estonia and Turkey," Lavrov told reporters.</p> <p>Kyiv has accused Russia of stealing grain from occupied Ukrainian territory to sell on the international markets. The country's grain exports are responsible for almost 15% of the world's total.</p> <p>The case of the Zhibek Zholy has brought claims of theft into sharp focus and put the Turkish government in a sensitive position as it continues to seek a mediating role between Moscow and Kyiv over the issue of global food supply.</p> <p>The voyage of the Zhibek Zholy had been proudly announced by the Moscow-appointed head of the occupied Zaporizhzhia region, where the port of Berdiansk lies, as the "first commercial ship" to take supplies out of Russian-controlled ports since the war began.</p> <p>The office of Ukraine's prosecutor general subsequently wrote to Turkey's justice ministry on 30 June, claiming the Zhibek Zholy was involved in the "illegal export of Ukrainian grain" and that it was headed to Karasu.</p> <p>Turkey was asked to "conduct an inspection of this sea vessel, seize samples of grain for forensic examination, demand information on the location of such grain".</p> <p>Speaking on Ukrainian national television on Sunday, the country's ambassador to Turkey, Vasyl Bodnar, had said he hoped the grain would be confiscated.</p> <p>He said: "We have full cooperation. The ship is currently standing at the entrance to the port. It has been detained by the customs authorities of Turkey."</p> <p>The difficulty of identifying the origins of the grain remains real, however. The Russian-appointed administrations in occupied territories also claim that they are working in partnership with local farmers to release grain into the global market.</p> <p>On Tuesday, authorities installed by Russia in the south-eastern Zaporizhzhia region of Ukraine announced an agreement to sell grain to Iraq, Iran and Saudi Arabia.</p> <p>The Russian news agency Tass quoted Yevgeny Balitsky, the head of the administration, saying that Russian agricultural traders and state companies were buying grain from the region's farmers.</p>

	“The prices are not bad at the moment,” Balitsky told the news agency. “A farmer gets around \$200 per tonne of grain, which is great, because his cost of production is around \$120, even taking into account the long storage time, which was forced.”
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HEADLINE	<b>07/05 Frontline mayor urges residents to flee</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jul/05/sloviansk-mayor-urges-residents-to-flee-city-as-russia-steps-up-shelling">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jul/05/sloviansk-mayor-urges-residents-to-flee-city-as-russia-steps-up-shelling</a>
GIST	<p>The mayor of Sloviansk has called on its remaining residents to evacuate as the Russian invaders stepped up their shelling of the frontline Ukrainian city after <a href="#">the capture of Lysychansk on Sunday</a>.</p> <p>Vadim Lyakh said 40 houses had been shelled on Monday – while other officials later said two people were killed and seven injured after Russian forces struck a market and a residential area in the city.</p> <p>“It’s important to evacuate as many people as possible,” Lyakh said in an interview with Reuters, noting separately that 144 people had been evacuated on Tuesday, including 20 children, from a city now deemed at risk from Russian bombardment.</p> <p>A day earlier, six people were killed and 20 injured in missile attacks aimed at the city, one of the main population centres in the Donbas region that remains outside Russian military control.</p> <p>The strikes came as Nato’s 30 members signed an accession protocol that formally invited Sweden and Finland to join the alliance. The agreement has to be ratified by every member state’s parliament, although last week Turkey’s president, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, <a href="#">warned that Ankara may not sign off on the deal</a>.</p> <p>Turkey had raised objections to Sweden and Finland’s membership amid concerns about the latter two countries’ relationship with Turkey’s Kurdish minority, but these were dropped after an agreement between the three last week.</p> <p>At a news conference, the foreign ministers of Sweden and Finland both denied that the two countries had agreed to extradite specific people to Turkey. “There is, of course, no lists or anything like that in the memorandum,” Sweden’s foreign minister, Ann Linde, said.</p> <p>Russia had concentrated its forces to capture the cities of Lysychansk and Sievierodonetsk between May and July, the last two cities in Luhansk province it did not control, through an unrelenting and often untargeted artillery barrage.</p> <p>Ukraine said on Monday it had retreated from Lysychansk, prompting speculation that Russia would now focus on Sloviansk and Kramatorsk to the south, the two main cities in Donetsk province held by Kyiv. The provinces of Luhansk and Donetsk make up Ukraine’s industrial Donbas region.</p> <p>Sloviansk had a population of 107,000 and Kramatorsk 210,000 before the war. Despite the threat of a Russian attack, thousands had remained, reluctant to abandon their homes despite being just a few miles from the frontlines.</p> <p>It is unclear if Moscow will immediately attempt to seize Sloviansk. The Russian president, Vladimir Putin, said on Monday that Russian troops who fought in Luhansk needed to “take some rest and beef up their combat capability”.</p> <p>On Tuesday, Sergei Shoigu, Russia’s defence minister, said the war in Ukraine would continue until all Putin’s goals were achieved – but added that “the main priorities” for Moscow at the moment were “preserving the lives and health” of the troops, as well as “excluding the threat to the security of civilians”.</p>

Ukraine hopes to bring forward recently obtained western weapons into the battlefield, most notably rocket artillery donated by the US and the UK, pointing to a critical point in the conflict in which Kyiv hopes to demonstrate it will be able to push the Russian invaders back.

“This is the last victory for Russia on Ukrainian territory,” Oleksiy Arestovych, an adviser to the president, Volodymyr Zelenskiy, said in a video posted online.

“Taking the cities in the east meant that 60% of Russian forces are now concentrated in the east and it is difficult for them to be redirected to the south,” he said. “And there are no more forces that can be brought in from Russia. They paid a big price for Sievierodonetsk and Lysychansk.”

One western analyst said he believed that assessment was optimistic. Nick Reynolds, a land warfare expert at the Rusi thinktank, said: “The loss of Lysychansk is a bad sign, and I fear that it is indeed a sign of sustainable Russian momentum.” While it was possible that Russia would run out of steam, he added, “I fear that the Ukrainian army will continue to be pushed back.”

Both sides suffered heavy losses in the battle for the two Luhansk cities, but Ukraine almost certainly more so because Russia, with as much as 10 times the artillery, was able to shell the defenders from a distance before moving in ground forces. Estimates provided to Rusi from Ukraine’s military were that 100 people a day on average were killed.

Four missiles hit the southern city of Mykolaiv on Tuesday, according to Roman Kostenko, an MP and special forces commander. Kostenko said infrastructure targets had been hit and some civilians suffered minor injuries.

“As they do every morning, Russia used their missiles as an alarm clock,” Kostenko said. “There were a few mornings when we woke up and didn’t hear any strikes. That was unusual. Today there were four missiles from either Kherson direction or from the Black Sea.”

Shortly after Russia invaded Ukraine its troops all but encircled Mykolaiv and its port on the Bug River, seizing the airport after advancing from the north-east. However, after weeks of fighting the Ukrainian army managed to push the Russians back, and the city has become a symbol of anti-Russian resistance.

According to Ukrainian authorities, Mykolaiv province is still regarded as a strategic target by Moscow and central to its goal of annexing Ukraine’s Black Sea coast, making it a “non-sea country”.

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HEADLINE	<b>07/05 Ukraine nuclear plant Russia military base</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/russian-army-turns-ukraines-largest-nuclear-plant-into-a-military-base-11657035694?mod=hp_lead_pos6">https://www.wsj.com/articles/russian-army-turns-ukraines-largest-nuclear-plant-into-a-military-base-11657035694?mod=hp_lead_pos6</a>
GIST	<p>The Russian army is transforming Europe’s <a href="#">largest nuclear power plant</a> into a military base overlooking an active front, intensifying a monthslong safety crisis for the vast facility and its thousands of staff.</p> <p>At the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant in southern Ukraine, more than 500 Russian soldiers who seized the facility in March recently have deployed heavy artillery batteries, and laid anti-personnel mines along the shores of the reservoir whose water cools its six reactors, according to workers, residents, Ukrainian officials, and diplomats. The Ukrainian army <a href="#">holds the towns dotted on the opposite shore</a>, some 3 miles away, but sees no easy way to attack the plant, given the inherent danger of artillery battles around active nuclear reactors.</p> <p>The new infusion of weaponry effectively shields the plant from a counterattack by Ukrainian forces, and amounts to something the carefully regulated atomic-energy industry has never seen before: The slow-motion transformation of a nuclear power station into a military garrison. In a lesser-scrutinized aspect of its war strategy, the Russian army is day-by-day positioning the weaponry around a nuclear plant that is</p>



among the world's largest, using it to [cement control of the front line](#) where their advance through southern Ukraine ground to a halt.

Russian forces deployed a Smerch artillery vehicle last month in the shadow of the 5.7 gigawatt complex's striped chimneys, adding to the grad rocket launchers, tanks and personnel carriers. The earth around the plant is carved with trenches, with military guard dogs stationed out of a makeshift kennel. Senior technicians from Rosatom, Russia's state atomic energy corporation, have set up a base in a guarded bunker beneath the plant.

"They are keeping it like a base for their artillery," said a European official posted to the nearby city of Zaporizhzhia, which remains in Ukrainian control. "They understand that Ukraine will not answer their attacks from the plant."

Ukrainian defense officials said that even if their forces could mount a conventional military effort to recapture the plant, they are focused on pushing a counteroffensive to the northeastern and southern cities of Kharkiv and Kherson.

"It seems like this is one of the Russian tactics, to take critical infrastructure and use it as a shield," said former Ukrainian Defense Minister Andriy Zagorodnyuk. "We're not going to storm the plant....The only way to do it would be to surround it, to take the surrounding areas, and ask them to leave."

Zaporizhzhia employees and their families fear the plant's growing militarization could lead to another accident just 300 miles from Chernobyl, scene of the world's worst nuclear disaster. "They don't understand what might happen because of their actions there," said the wife of one worker.

Last week, the United Nations' nuclear regulator was in the dark for three days about conditions inside Zaporizhzhia, after its data connection to the plant went offline before being restored. That marked the second time since Russia's invasion that the [International Atomic Energy Agency](#)'s Vienna headquarters has lost its feed from the cameras and instruments that normally relay security footage and safety readings from the vast complex.

The Wall Street Journal spoke to Zaporizhzhia plant workers, their managers, local officials and diplomats following the crisis, reviewed messages shared between workers and their relatives and annotated maps showing the Russian military buildup. Russia's Defense Ministry didn't reply to a request for comment. A representative for Rosatom said its employees on site weren't involved in management or security, but have been sent to offer "technical, consulting, communications and other assistance to the operator if required".

On Wednesday, the Ukrainian state energy company Energoatom, which still manages the plant, said Russian troops were threatening to drain the cooling pools to find any weapons they suspected Ukrainian resistance fighters had hidden underwater. That could pose a serious challenge to the plant, which relies on a steady flow of filtered water to cool its reactors and spent fuel rods.

As their occupation grinds on, some Russian soldiers stationed at Zaporizhzhia have turned to a strategy of routine extortion: kidnapping some of the 11,000 plant workers for ransom. More than 40 people are currently being held captive, say plant workers, with families using group chats on the social-media messaging app Viber to share pictures of abducted personnel and crowdfund their ransoms. At the plant, their colleagues complain they are having to work extra hours to cover the shifts of kidnapping victims.

"Please help me," one man posted to a Viber group, sharing photos of his heavily bruised face and right leg, his right eye bloodshot. Russians would only release him, he added, if he raised 50,000 hryvnias, equivalent to \$1,681, within three days.

"Such cases are by no means isolated," said a plant worker who recently fled the area for unoccupied Ukraine. The workers being held for ransom include his friend, an instructor of safety protocol who also provided psychological counseling for the plant's staff. "No one wants to be next," the worker said.

Russian forces overwhelmed the Zaporizhzhia plant with an artillery and rocket-propelled grenade barrage during the early hours of March 4, eight days after the invasion. The assault set a training center on fire just a few hundred yards from the six reactors, only two of which are still in operation.

Nuclear safety specialists say that without independent experts visiting the site, it is difficult to assess the various risks that Russian land mines, artillery and loosely disciplined soldiers pose to the plant's two active reactors. The takeover of an active nuclear power plant is unprecedented and presents a series of complex, interlocking questions, such as whether the mines around the reservoir could damage the filters that sieve the water pumped into the reactors.

Russia is one of 32 United Nations member countries—including the U.S.—that haven't signed a 1997 treaty banning the use of antipersonnel mines in war. The devices are particularly treacherous because they often become more volatile as they age over decades and explosives harden while components corrode.

The IAEA, which has for months unsuccessfully tried to negotiate agreement and safe passage to conduct an inspection of the site, says nearly all of what it calls the seven pillars of nuclear safety have been compromised at Zaporizhzhia. These include the physical integrity of the building, regular off-site monitoring of radiation, and the steady flow of spare parts, fuel and supplies. IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi has said that he also wants to confirm that none of the plant's supply of enriched uranium and enriched plutonium has gone missing, because it could, though with great difficulty, be enriched to a much higher, weapons-grade level. "This is what keeps us awake at night at the moment," he told an audience in Switzerland in May.

The primary and immediate risk is to the plant's staff. Ukrainian nuclear safety protocols are based on enormous numbers of workers helming components that in a western plant would be monitored by far fewer people. The duress of the occupation poses the danger, nuclear specialists said, that workers would commit stress-induced errors, or simply leave their stations to seek refuge in Ukrainian-held territory just across the river.

There, in the regional capital of Zaporizhzhia, many aspects of life continue more or less as normal: People ride the city tram to work, eat lunch in bustling public parks and attend Mass on Sundays. The wail of air-raid sirens or the distant booms of artillery play out in the background.

Inside the plant, meanwhile, ordinary technicians and repairmen have been vowing to resist the takeover.

Suspected Ukrainian spies have been taken away for days and often weeks, beaten, tortured and denied food, according to workers and plant management. In May, a 53-year-old maintenance technician, Sergey Shvets, was shot by the Russians, accused of passing information to Ukraine's defense forces to undermine the occupation.

"There can be no good radiation safety at a nuclear power plant where personnel are living in an occupied city whose population is terrorized," said Mark Zheleznyak, professor at Japan's Fukushima Institute of Environmental Radioactivity.

The abductions, once focused on plant workers suspected of joining or supporting the Ukrainian self-defense units, have widened in the past few weeks, workers and residents say. Increasingly, Russian forces are holding and ransoming civilian workers regardless of their loyalties and taking more women in addition to men.

"The occupiers have another major activity, kidnapping for money," said Dmitry Orlov, the mayor of the nearby city of Enerhodar, which he fled after Russian soldiers seized it. "Every day we receive two or three reports of new kidnappings...people are being abducted en masse."

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SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/ba-5-subvariant-drives-majority-of-recent-covid-19-cases-11657043207?mod=lead_feature_below_a_pos1">https://www.wsj.com/articles/ba-5-subvariant-drives-majority-of-recent-covid-19-cases-11657043207?mod=lead_feature_below_a_pos1</a>
GIST	<p>The highly contagious <a href="#">Omicron BA.5 subvariant has taken over</a> as the dominant version of the virus causing new Covid-19 cases in the U.S., the latest federal data show.</p> <p>BA.5 represented nearly 54% of U.S. cases in the week ended July 2, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimated Tuesday. It surpassed BA.2.12.1, the version of Omicron partly responsible for a persistent springtime surge in cases, which is now estimated to represent closer to one in four cases.</p> <p>Another version known as BA.4, which is closely related to BA.5, and also ramped up recently, represents nearly 17% of cases, the CDC estimates.</p> <p>Virus experts believe BA.5 is particularly adept at evading immune protections built up from prior infections and vaccines, giving it an advantage as it takes over as the major subvariant. This adds to the possibility people will contract Covid-19 repeatedly while facing the <a href="#">risk of developing complications</a> like long-running and sometimes debilitating symptoms.</p> <p>The U.S. is immersed in a prolonged case surge that began this spring, fueled by other versions of Omicron, and appears to have at least plateaued at a high level. At the same time, hospitalizations and deaths have remained at more muted levels as <a href="#">built-up immune protections</a> from vaccines and prior infections help tamp down on more severe cases, even as the virus continues to easily spread.</p> <p>The U.S. seven-day moving average for new Covid-19 cases has mostly hovered slightly above 100,000 a day since May, according to CDC data through last week, before the July Fourth holiday temporarily slowed reporting. These cases likely represent a fraction of actual infections due to at-home testing states generally don't track, epidemiologists say.</p> <p>Public-health experts believe BA.5 will at least extend this trend of elevated cases, which come at a time many people have abandoned other mitigation measures like wearing masks in public places while also returning to more <a href="#">normal patterns of travel and social gatherings</a>.</p> <p>Hospitalizations remain far below levels seen in prior peaks, but there are signs of upward pressure, the latest federal data show. Such numbers can reflect the level of virus in the community, as a portion of Covid-19 hospitalization data reflects patients who needed care for other reasons, but tested positive during screening.</p> <p>The seven-day moving average for confirmed, prior-day hospital admissions recently surpassed 5,000 a day for the first time since late February, data from the Department of Health and Human Services show. The U.S. in early April was averaging less than 1,500 new admissions a day.</p> <p>Meantime, the U.S. recently averaged slightly more than 300 deaths a day. A year ago the average dipped to slightly above 200 a day, reflecting a lull in cases as vaccinations rose and a respite before the Delta and then Omicron variants took hold.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/05 IAEA chief warns of growing nuclear risks</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-n-atomic-chief-warns-of-growing-nuclear-risks-11657054576?mod=hp_listb_pos3">https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-n-atomic-chief-warns-of-growing-nuclear-risks-11657054576?mod=hp_listb_pos3</a>
GIST	<p>The head of the United Nations nuclear agency gave a sharp warning Tuesday about growing nuclear risks, saying that Iran's activities risked a regional nuclear arms race and that <a href="#">Russia's occupation of Ukrainian nuclear sites</a> threatened to imperil the agency's ability to ensure nuclear material wasn't being misused.</p> <p>In a wide-ranging speech at the Australian National University in Canberra, Rafael Grossi, the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, warned that "we are reaching a defining moment for global</p>

nuclear nonproliferation,” in which the risks of the spread of nuclear weapons “pose a problem for everyone.”

With talks on restoring the 2015 nuclear agreement stalled and Iran stepping up its nuclear work, Mr. Grossi warned that Iran’s actions—which include the production of highly enriched uranium—could persuade the country’s neighbors to ramp up nuclear programs.

“We are now in a situation where Iran’s neighbors could start to fear the worst and plan accordingly,” he said. “There are countries in the region today looking very carefully at what is happening with Iran, and tensions in the region are rising.” He added that some political leaders have on occasion “openly stated they would actively seek nuclear weapons if Iran were to pose a nuclear threat.”

Saudi Arabia, which has signed up to only the lightest of international oversight, has in recent years [expanded its nuclear program](#). Saudi officials haven’t ruled out enriching uranium, even as the kingdom, a strong regional foe of Tehran, insists that any nuclear program it pursues will be peaceful.

Israel is believed to have the only nuclear-weapons arsenal in the Mideast, but its government refuses to confirm or deny possessing them. Israel has struck suspected [nuclear-weapons efforts in Syria](#) in 2007 and in Iraq in the early 1980s.

Mr. Grossi’s speech comes after the IAEA director-general warned on June 10 that Iran’s decision to remove agency cameras from a range of nuclear-related sites could make it impossible within three-to-four weeks to keep tabs on Iran’s nuclear program, providing a fatal blow to efforts to revive the 2015 nuclear deal. Since then, nuclear talks between [the U.S. and Iran](#) in Doha proved unsuccessful and Tehran has said it won’t reverse its decision to reduce IAEA oversight.

The IAEA chief pointed to a range of other potential proliferation risks, including new plans to develop nuclear-powered submarines, the verbal threat of using nuclear weapons first and aggression by nuclear-weapon states against nonnuclear countries, above all [Russia’s invasion of Ukraine](#).

The IAEA has repeatedly warned the conflict in Ukraine, which has a large civilian nuclear program, posed serious safety risks, and there have been a number of incidents which have provoked alarm, including a fire at Ukraine’s Zaporizhzhia plant during Russia’s occupation of the site. Staff were trapped for weeks at the now-defunct [Chernobyl nuclear plant](#) and at Zaporizhzhia, Europe’s largest nuclear plant, which contains six nuclear reactors.

The Wall Street Journal reported Tuesday that the Russian army is transforming Zaporizhzhia, into a military base overlooking an active front, intensifying a monthslong safety crisis for the vast facility and its thousands of staff.

Mr. Grossi, who has been trying to get access to Zaporizhzhia for an IAEA team to deliver safety equipment and carry out essential security work, warned that until now, the agency has been able to conduct all critical so-called safeguards work, to ensure that activities are monitored and nuclear material hasn’t been diverted for illicit purposes.

“But this is now in danger of soon no longer holding true,” he warned. “With Zaporizhzhia NPP under Russian control, Ukrainian’s regulator has informed us it has ‘lost control over’ the facility’s nuclear material that is subject to the Safeguards Agreement between Ukraine and the IAEA,” he said.

The IAEA has also lost contact with the remote monitoring connection at the site on multiple occasions, Mr. Grossi said, although Ukraine’s nuclear regulator said Friday that it had restored connection to the surveillance systems at the site.

“It is vital Ukraine be able to continue to fulfill its safeguards obligations unimpeded,” he said.

HEADLINE	07/05 Ukrainians leave ghost towns behind
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/05/world/europe/ukraine-war-donbas.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/05/world/europe/ukraine-war-donbas.html</a>
GIST	<p>BAKHMUT, Ukraine — Nina Zakharenko cried when she boarded a minibus evacuating civilians as the Russian Army advanced toward the town where she went to college, met her husband and raised two daughters.</p> <p>Ms. Zakharenko is 72 now, and may be leaving the town forever.</p> <p>“I can hold on, I can hold on,” she said, finding the strength to stop crying. “But Bakhmut was my only home.”</p> <p>The Russian Army is now on the outskirts of the town, Bakhmut, and ramping up its shelling. The attack is part of an inch-by-inch offensive into the province of Donetsk now that Luhansk, another province that Moscow has sought to capture in eastern Ukraine, fell over the weekend into Russia’s grasp.</p> <p>The attacks on Bakhmut, a vital staging area for Ukrainian forces in recent weeks, mirror <a href="#">the creeping artillery tactic Russia used to</a> seize the last two cities standing in Luhansk, driving out Ukrainian defenders — and nearly all the people.</p> <p>At least half of the pre-invasion population of 6.1 million people in the two provinces — known collectively as the Donbas — have fled over the past months of fighting, Ukrainian officials and international aid groups say. The flight by crowded <a href="#">train cars</a>, <a href="#">packed highways</a> and <a href="#">desperate overnight drives</a> has left the two armies fighting over largely abandoned fields and streets, and Ukraine’s government facing the problem of millions without long-term homes.</p> <p>Whoever prevails, one thing seems clear: Few people are likely to return to the Donbas anytime soon. It is not just the obvious problem of ruined towns and destroyed factories. Even before the war, the industrial region was facing fading prospects. Now, whenever the fighting stops, its factories and coal mines are an unlikely engine for any revival.</p> <p>Nearly five months of war has damaged the structures that keep cities working — factories, airports, railway stations — and obliterated residential buildings, schools, hospitals, churches and shopping malls. Ukraine’s prime minister, Denys Shmyhal, told an international donors conference in Italy this week that more than a quarter-million people have registered homes as damaged or destroyed, and that the cost to rebuild <a href="#">was estimated at \$750 billion</a>.</p> <p>And the bombs continue to fall.</p> <p>President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine warned the donors conference that the task of rebuilding the country would be “colossal.” Russia’s indiscriminate shelling is an attempt to destroy not just Ukraine but also the vision of a democratic Europe, he said by video link.</p> <p>“This is Russia’s attack on everything that is of value to you and me,” Mr. Zelensky said. “Therefore, the reconstruction of Ukraine is not a local project, not a project of one nation, but a joint task of the entire democratic world.”</p> <p>On Tuesday, Russia’s shelling began intensifying in the Donetsk region, signifying that a new offensive might be starting, Ukrainian officials said. In Sloviansk, one of the cities in Donetsk that lies in Russia’s path, Mayor Vadym Lyakh urged residents to flee, saying the city was now on the front lines.</p> <p>“Artillery is already hitting the city,” he warned in an interview on Ukrainian television, saying that 40 houses had been destroyed by shelling the day before. In a Facebook post, he said that one person was killed Tuesday and seven others wounded in an attack on the city’s central market.</p>

Rocket strikes on the city Tuesday suggested that a day after President Vladimir V. Putin [ordered troops in Luhansk to rest](#), if they had truly done so, other parts of the Russian Army were already on the move. Military analysts believe Russia will next try to encircle the towns of Bakhmut, Sloviansk and Kramatorsk.

Mr. Zelensky has vowed that Ukraine will recapture lost territory in the Donbas, and Ukrainian officials have held out hope for cutting Russian supply lines with new, long-range weaponry from the United States and European nations, such as the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System.

On Tuesday, Ukraine said it had used one such rocket launcher to strike an ammunition depot in Dibrivne, about 40 miles behind Russian lines, a sign that Ukraine's tactics are evolving.

But whether Ukrainian troops, having taken heavy casualties and in some places endured shelling for weeks, can follow up long-range strikes with counterattacks is in deep question. For now, outgunned Ukrainian troops are falling back over the rolling plains, retreating from towns and villages in a brutal, slow-moving fight that, Ukrainian officials have said, sometimes kills 100 to 200 soldiers a day.

Residents in the path of Russia's advance aren't waiting to find out whether the tide will turn. When night sets in, just one or two windows light up along entire streets through the region. Storefronts are boarded up. Town squares are empty.

To drive around the Donbas now is to see a land without people. Second and third lines of defensive trenches are cut across farm fields, but farmers rarely appear. Highways unfurl past abandoned towns and sprawling hulks of ruined factories.

In Bakhmut, a town of leafy streets and brick apartment buildings with a prewar population of about 100,000 people, the streets are empty. Wind rustles the poplar trees. Stray dogs mill about. A few military vehicles zip to and fro.

Moscow justified the invasion partly as an operation to protect Russian-speaking people in the Donbas, but only a tiny number of them have actually stuck around for the Russian Army to arrive. Those who remain are typically caring for ailing family members, are too poor to move or are trying to protect property. Some do support Russia, a group known as the zhduny, or the waiting ones.

Before the Russian invasion in February, about half the residents of the Donbas lived in Ukrainian-controlled areas, and half in two Russian-backed enclaves shorn off from Ukraine in 2014.

On the Russian side, officials said they intended to evacuate 700,000 people, though it is unclear how many actually left. On the Ukrainian side, the vast majority have fled. In the Donetsk region, 80 percent of the pre-invasion population has left, regional officials say.

Communities near the front are eerie ghost towns. Pavlo Boreyko, who worked at a laboratory at a metals plant, said he saw no hope for Bakhmut, his hometown, and had decided to leave. "I am fed up with this city," he said. "For years, we have been at the frontline."

But as Mr. Boreyko was evacuating with his 90-year-old father, he started to cry when a realization struck him: "I will have to bury Father not in his homeland."

Mr. Boreyko's wife and two daughters were already waiting in western Ukraine. He carried only a few bags, leaving the family home behind to stand vacant alongside thousands of others in Bakhmut.

Those who remain live a tentative life.

Svitlana Kravchenko, an activist who has supported Ukrainian culture in Bakhmut, shipped her collection of folk art, embroidered traditional clothing and most of her belongings to western Ukraine. "I packed all valuables in bags and sent them from Bakhmut," she said.



Now she sits in her empty house, the walls devoid of art, listening to the artillery grow closer. She will leave if the city is about to fall, she said, but only at the very last minute.

Most businesses are boarded up, but not that of Ihor Feshchenko — whose business is boarding up windows. His family left but he remained to earn money installing particleboard over windows, either before or after they are broken.

“The best advertisement for me is shelling,” he said.

The terrifying booms drive more and more people away, and as they leave they ask Mr. Feshchenko to seal their windows. “As soon as the city is shelled at night, in the morning I have dozens of phone calls,” he said.

When Oleksiy Ovchynnikov, 43, a children’s dance instructor, finally decided to leave, he entered his dance studio, called Grace, one last time to pick up furniture and equipment. It was already heaped in a pile, ready to move.

He ordered a driver to load up a car for the capital, Kyiv, where he is moving his studio. Then he looked at the pictures he had left on the walls, for whoever might find them there, of children in bright costumes, dancing in performances.

“They all left,” he said of the students.

The pictures included a black-and-white photograph of a little girl dancing and smiling at the camera.

Mr. Ovchynnikov turned off the light and closed the door.

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HEADLINE	07/05 Outbreak in China province new challenge
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/07/05/world/covid-19-mandates-vaccine-cases?name=stylncoronavirus&amp;region=hub&amp;block=storyline_live_updates_block_recirc&amp;action=click&amp;pgtype=LegacyCollection#&amp;cid=covid-outbreak-china-anhui-province">https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/07/05/world/covid-19-mandates-vaccine-cases?name=stylncoronavirus&amp;region=hub&amp;block=storyline_live_updates_block_recirc&amp;action=click&amp;pgtype=LegacyCollection#&amp;cid=covid-outbreak-china-anhui-province</a>
GIST	<p>As China gradually emerges from a Covid-19 surge that <a href="#">shut down Shanghai</a> for two months, an outbreak in eastern Anhui Province is posing a new challenge to efforts to <a href="#">balance economic growth</a> with the government’s “zero Covid” policy.</p> <p>There were more than 200 reported cases in Anhui’s Suzhou city on Monday. Since the outbreak was detected on June 26, the province has reported more than 1,000 cases, according to <a href="#">the Suzhou municipal government</a>.</p> <p>China had only recently begun to recover from outbreaks in dozens of cities that began in March. In addition to the financial capital of Shanghai, which in June emerged from a <a href="#">two-month citywide lockdown</a>, the tech hub of Shenzhen, and Beijing, China’s capital, were also affected by outbreaks. Shanghai’s Communist Party leader <a href="#">declared last month</a> that the city had defended itself against Covid, and said that this proved that the zero-Covid strategy was correct.</p> <p>With Covid-control measures taking a toll on the economy, the authorities have recently issued policies aimed at helping business and increasing consumption. The information ministry stopped indicating in <a href="#">travel codes</a> that someone had traveled from a city reporting coronavirus cases, and the National Health Commission cut in half the <a href="#">quarantine period</a> for inbound international travelers to seven days.</p> <p>But Anhui’s government issued strict orders to stamp out the province’s cases. The Communist Party secretary <a href="#">promised to eliminate transmission</a> outside quarantine centers within a week, and told local government officials that there could be no coronavirus-related deaths or cases among medical workers. Local governments quickly doubled down on restrictions.</p>

Most of Anhui's cases were identified in Suzhou's Si County, where on Wednesday the authorities ordered its 760,000 residents to refrain from going out unless it was necessary. The order came three days after the first cases were detected, and nearly everyone in the county has been tested seven times in the past 10 days, according to the authorities. The municipal government of Suzhou said the county had taken 22,000 people who were deemed close contacts of people who have tested positive to government isolation centers, and residents in dozens of neighborhoods where cases were found were barred from leaving their homes.

Still, cases appear to be spreading beyond Anhui. Suzhou borders Jiangsu, Henan and Shandong Provinces. According to the health authorities in those provinces, more than 300 cases reported in at least a dozen cities in neighboring provinces were linked to the outbreak in Suzhou.

Elsewhere in the country, the government of Xi'an, a city of 13 million people, said Tuesday that it would impose tight restrictions after reporting 18 cases since Saturday. For a week, public facilities, entertainment businesses and schools will be shut down, and dining in restaurants will be banned.

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HEADLINE	<b>07/05 Covid 3<sup>rd</sup> leading cause death in pandemic</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/jul/5/covid-was-third-leading-cause-death-during-pandemi/">https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/jul/5/covid-was-third-leading-cause-death-during-pandemi/</a>
GIST	<p>COVID-19 was the third-leading cause of death after heart disease and cancer during the pandemic, according to a study of national death certificate records.</p> <p>A research letter published Tuesday in JAMA Internal Medicine found that 350,000 Americans died of COVID-19 from March to December 2020. During the same period, 580,000 died of heart disease and 501,000 died of cancer.</p> <p>From January to October 2021, the study found, 346,000 Americans died of COVID-19, 571,000 died of heart disease and 502,000 died of cancer.</p> <p>The fourth and fifth leading causes of death from March 2020 to November 2021 were accidents and strokes, respectively.</p> <p>Dr. Panagis Galiatsatos, an assistant professor at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine in Baltimore, said it's rare for an infectious disease other than flu to be among the top 10 causes of death during the past 30 years. No other infectious disease has broken into the top five causes of death during the past five years, he noted in an email.</p> <p>"My goodness, if that does not rock you, then I'm not sure what would," Dr. Galiatsatos said. "I cannot fathom one looking at these numbers and being dismissive."</p> <p>Sister Deirdre "Dede" Byrne, a Catholic nun and medical doctor who sued D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser for a religious exemption to COVID-19 vaccine mandates, said many Americans would be surprised to learn that COVID-19 ranked only third.</p> <p>That's because the media "definitely overhyped" the lethality of the virus, she said in a text message.</p> <p>"And increased death due to refusal of alternative therapies such as ivermectin and hydroxychloroquine," said Sister Byrne, who spoke at the 2020 Republican National Convention.</p> <p>Public health experts said the high rate of spread of the coronavirus swiftly made COVID-19 a leading cause of death, even if only about 1% of the people who tested positive in the U.S. died from it.</p> <p>"If one just casually looked at the impact that COVID-19 has had, it shouldn't be surprising that it is a third leading cause of death," said Amesh Adalja, a senior scholar at the Johns Hopkins Center for Health</p>

Security. “Pandemics have the capacity to do this. The 1918 [flu] pandemic had a similar impact. The sheer number of people infected, even with a relatively low case fatality rate, still leads to a high number of deaths.”

Dr. Adalja said that, though cancer and heart disease have higher burdens overall, they are not as calamitous because they do not threaten hospital capacity or disrupt society.

“They are part of the baseline. They are not contagious, they don’t require special personal protective equipment, they don’t have the same impact on society,” he said. “They impact one person. Infectious diseases do not.”

The virus that causes COVID-19 was discovered in Wuhan, China, at the end of 2019. Its impact on the central Chinese city was swift and devastating before the communist government locked people in their homes to wrangle transmission.

Still, COVID-19 spread to population centers in South Korea, Iran and Italy — the first Western nation to embrace lockdowns to try to slow the spread.

U.S. officials said the risk to the American population appeared low at first, but the virus soon gained a foothold and wreaked the same havoc as elsewhere.

Federal data after the first year of the pandemic found roughly 3.2 million people died in the U.S. in 2020, compared with about 2.8 million in 2019.

Although deaths tend to rise with population increases each year, a nearly 15% increase is highly unusual. COVID-19 deaths were driven by the new virus and its ripple effects, as people likely delayed care for other diseases.

Dr. William Schaffner, an infectious diseases specialist at Vanderbilt University, said COVID-19 infection also probably accelerated the demise of people whose underlying diseases were listed on their death certificates.

“It pushed them over — made their lung disease, heart disease, worse,” Dr. Schaffner said. “The impact of COVID as stated is larger than the statistic.”

Some political observers agreed.

“To go from zero to third is a lot,” said James Carville, a longtime Democratic Party strategist.

The Children’s Health Defense, an anti-vaccine advocacy group chaired by lawyer Robert F. Kennedy Jr., faulted Tuesday’s study for not exploring the relationship between heart disease deaths and COVID-19 deaths.

“I think it is very telling that deaths related to heart disease increased over the same time period,” said Brian Hooker, the group’s chief science director. “What is absent here is a risk-benefit analysis of COVID-19 vaccination in general, as heart problems have been established as an adverse event associated with vaccination.”

The study found that accidents were the leading cause of death among Americans ages 1 to 44 in 2020 and 2021 and COVID-19 deaths were higher among older Americans.

Among those ages 45 to 54, COVID-19 was the No. 1 leading cause of death in 2021, killing 30,000 people — 16.8% of all deaths for that age group, the study found.

“The pandemic may also have indirectly led to increases in other causes of death, including heart disease, diabetes, Alzheimer’s disease, and unintentional injuries,” the study reported.

	Four public health researchers studied final national death certificate data for 2020 and provisional data for 2021. They obtained the most recent records from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on May 5.
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HEADLINE	<b>07/05 DHS eases inadmissible barrier legal status</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/jul/5/dhs-erases-barrier-legal-status-some-illegal-immig/">https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/jul/5/dhs-erases-barrier-legal-status-some-illegal-immig/</a>
GIST	<p>Making it back into the U.S. after being ousted is “irrelevant” to an illegal immigrant’s eligibility to apply for a new legal status, the Homeland Security Department’s citizenship agency says in a new policy.</p> <p>In the past, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services would have denied the application under a law that required onetime illegal immigrants to wait outside the country for up to 10 years before they would be eligible to apply to come back legally.</p> <p>Experts said the policy now says the law doesn’t require a wait elsewhere as long as the immigrant doesn’t pop up on Homeland Security’s radar during the waiting period.</p> <p>“This is like the ‘don’t ask, don’t tell.’ We won’t ask you where you’ve been during your inadmissible period, and you don’t tell us. It’s sheer craziness,” said Emilio Gonzalez, who ran USCIS during the George W. Bush administration.</p> <p>At issue is the three-year/10-year bar to admissibility, which is supposed to deter immigrants from trying to live in the country illegally.</p> <p>Under the three-year/10-year bar, someone who was in the U.S. without legal status for at least six months but less than a year must depart and wait three years before applying to come back legally. Someone in the U.S. without authorization for more than a year must leave and wait 10 years before applying and being deemed admissible.</p> <p>USCIS previously assumed migrants were supposed to wait outside the U.S. during the bar, Mr. Gonzalez said. Those who returned before their time was up would be denied.</p> <p>The new policy says that’s no longer the case.</p> <p>The policy, dated June 24, says the “noncitizen’s location during the statutory 3-year or 10-year period and the noncitizen’s manner of return to the United States during the statutory 3-year or 10-year period are irrelevant for purposes of determining inadmissibility.”</p> <p>The policy appears to apply retroactively. Would-be migrants who were denied based on location at the time of application can file motions to reopen their cases.</p> <p>A footnote says the “manner by which the noncitizen returns ... may result in the accrual of a new period of unlawful presence.”</p> <p>In a statement to The Washington Times, USCIS said someone who left and then sneaked back into the U.S. illegally could still be blocked by other sections of the law.</p> <p>“That individual is subject to an additional and more onerous ground of inadmissibility,” the agency said.</p> <p>That didn’t mollify analysts, who said the overall thrust of the memo is to pursue leniency.</p> <p>“This is basically an invitation for any deported alien to pay the cartels to smuggle them back into the U.S. while they let the clock run out,” said Rob Law, who headed the USCIS policy office in the Trump</p>

administration and is now director of the America First Policy Institute's Center for Homeland Security and Immigration.

Rosemary Jenks, vice president at NumbersUSA, which advocates for stricter immigration controls, said if people are allowed to sneak back into the U.S. and live without losing their place in line, there's no reason not to attempt it.

She pointed out that sneaking back into the U.S. after deportation is a felony, making government leniency an odd move.

"The entire point of the 3-year/10-year bar was to deter people from coming illegally, knowing they would not be able to get in legally for an extended period of time," Ms. Jenks said.

The bar is applied relatively infrequently, and it's not clear how many people the policy would affect.

USCIS said one reason for the new policy is to bring unity to its operations. The agency said it was aware of instances in which different offices reached different conclusions about how to apply the rules concerning an applicant's location. The agency did not provide more details.

USCIS also said the change is in response to two federal district court rulings on the issue, though the agency acknowledged neither decision was binding.

One case involved a Japanese woman who entered the U.S. on a short-term visitor's visa in 1996 and stayed until 2003, thus triggering the 10-year bar. She returned in 2005 and again overstayed, but eventually applied for status after marrying a U.S. citizen.

The judge ruled that the law says the 10-year bar runs from the time she departed, regardless of her return and subsequent overstay.

The other case involved a Brazilian man who came to the U.S. on a tourist visa in 1993. He overstayed and was ordered deported in 1994, but he didn't leave until 2000. He managed to get another tourist visa in 2002 by hiding his previous illegal presence and has remained in the U.S. since.

He applied for permanent status in 2016, but USCIS said he was ineligible because of the 10-year bar, which should have been in place to prevent his second arrival.

The judge ruled that the illegal reentry doesn't start the 10-year clock.

"I hold that an alien is inadmissible only during the 10-year period following his or her departure," said Judge Kevin McNulty, an Obama appointee to the court in New Jersey. Still, he acknowledged it might amount to "bad policy."

Ms. Jenks said the new USCIS policy may run afoul of the Administrative Procedure Act, which requires a public comment period before major policy changes are implemented. The act has repeatedly snagged the Biden administration's immigration policy changes, just as it did for some of President Trump's moves.

USCIS described the new rule as "policy guidance." It said the policy manual had no language dealing with the matter.

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HEADLINE	07/05 California 4 <sup>th</sup> July wildfire explodes in size
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/jul/05/california-wildfire-electra-fire">https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/jul/05/california-wildfire-electra-fire</a>
GIST	An explosive wildfire that erupted in <a href="#">California</a> on Fourth of July more than doubled in size overnight, quickly consuming more than 3,000 acres by Tuesday morning.

The fast-moving Electra fire, burning through the dried grasses and steep, rugged terrain east of Sacramento has forced hundreds of evacuations and continues to pose threats to critical power infrastructure according to officials with the California department of forestry and fire protection (CalFire).

What caused the blaze, which ignited in the afternoon, is still under investigation but officials said fireworks or a barbecue could be a possibility. It is just one of dozens burning in the parched American west that is bracing for another intense wildfire season. With months left before wildfire activity typically peaks in the region, more than 4.5m acres have burned across the US – [an amount more than double the 10-year average](#) for this time of year, according to the national interagency fire center (NIFC).

The Electra fire, which officials said on Monday was “burning at a dangerous rate of spread”, and remains at 0% containment, forced holiday revelers in the area to flee. Roughly 100 people celebrating at a recreation area known as Vox Beach along a river in the area had to seek refuge in a nearby Pacific Gas & Electric Co facility, said Gary Redman, sheriff of Amador country, east of Sacramento.

“The trees keep going down,” Redman told the Associated Press late on Monday, explaining why the evacuees had to remain in the facility for hours into the evening. “The whole place is on fire.” Firefighters had to work to clear a path to the facility so that a bus or patrol cars could be brought in to carry people out. They were safely evacuated, along with PG&E employees, about 9.30pm.

The utility company said the fire had also [affected power for roughly 13,100 customers](#) in parts of Amador county and that several distribution lines had been de-energized to protect firefighters battling the blaze, at CalFire’s request.

Along with a high rate of spread, the fire had also exhibited extreme behavior, generating large plumes of smoke that impaired air quality into the foothills and the Sierra.

“Throughout California, we are still paying the price of an extended period of drought,” said Jon Heggie, a CalFire battalion chief, describing the stressed state of landscapes that are now more primed to burn. What he called a “recipe for disaster” – the combination of desiccated vegetation and rising temperatures that linger long into the night – are symptoms of the climate crisis that has intensified risk conditions. “The fire behavior we are seeing is not like what we started with in our careers,” he said, adding that the agency has had to rethink how it battles behemoth blazes.

While the risks for ignitions now stretch across seasons, they are highest in summer and autumn months in California, when a rainy reprieve is unlikely and vegetation browns quickly, baked by rising temperatures. But the state is not alone in facing these dangers. Scientists with the NIFC highlighted in their most recent outlook that areas of the Pacific north-west, Hawaii and Texas are also among those expected to face increased threats in the coming months.

Alaska, which has been hammered by an early onset of unusually hot, dry conditions, has already had more than 2m acres charred this year, breaking records and endangering Indigenous communities. More [than 200 fires are burning across the state](#) and forecasters have cautioned that this may only be the beginning of a harrowing summer of fire there.

“While this doesn’t guarantee a record fire season this year, it does illustrate how dry conditions are across the state,” officials [wrote](#) in an update on 3 July. “It’s also an indicator of how busy firefighters have been so far this season with several months still left to go.”

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HEADLINE	07/06 Shanghai, Beijing new round Covid testing
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/shanghai-beijing-order-round-mass-covid-19-testing-86283553">https://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/shanghai-beijing-order-round-mass-covid-19-testing-86283553</a>



## GIST

BEIJING -- Residents of parts of Shanghai and Beijing have been ordered to undergo further rounds of COVID-19 testing following the discovery of new cases in the two cities, while tight restrictions remain in place in Hong Kong, Macao and other Chinese cities.

Shanghai has only just emerged from a strict lockdown that confined most of its 24 million residents to their homes for weeks and the new requirements have stirred concerns of a return of such harsh measures.

The latest outbreak in China's largest city, a key international business center, has been linked to a karaoke parlor that reopened without authorization during lockdown and failed to enforce prevention measures among employees and customers, including the tracing of others they came into contact with, according to the city health commission. All such outlets have been ordered to temporarily suspend business, the city's department of culture and tourism said.

"The virus spreads quickly because such entertainment venues are mostly indoor and closed, with frequent movement of people, high concentrations of people and inadequate personal protection measures," said Zhao Dandan, deputy director of Shanghai's municipal health commission.

Apartment blocks where cases are discovered continue to be isolated, while mass testing in the majority of the city's 16 districts has been ordered at least through Thursday. A negative test result obtained within the previous 48 hours is required to enter residential compounds and public venues under the "two tests within three days" program.

Entertainment businesses from water parks to chess clubs and internet cafes have been wanting to reopen but face an uncertain regulatory environment.

Those types of venues will "gradually open in an orderly and strict manner according to the situation of epidemic prevention and control in each district," said Jin Lei, deputy director of the city's culture and tourism department.

Shanghai's lockdown prompted unusual protests both in person and online against the government's harsh enforcement, which left many residents struggling to access food and medical services and sent thousands to quarantine centers.

Beijing has also seen a recent outbreak linked to a nightlife spot. It has been conducting regular testing for weeks and at least one residential compound in the suburb of Shunyi, where many foreign residents live, has been locked down with a steel fence installed over its entrance to prevent residents from leaving.

Enforcement in China's capital has been far milder than in Shanghai, although officials continue to require regular testing and prevention measures.

In the northern city of Xi'an, whose 13 million residents endured one of China's strictest lockdowns over the winter, restaurants have been restricted to takeout only and public entertainment spots closed for a week starting Wednesday.

A notice on the city government's website said the measures were only temporary and intended to prevent a renewed outbreak. It said supermarkets, offices, public transport and other facilities are continuing to operate as normal, with routine screening including temperature checks and people being required to show an app proving they are free of infection.

The gambling hub of Macao has meanwhile locked down the famed Grand Lisboa Hotel after cases were discovered there. More than a dozen residential and commercial centers in the Chinese special autonomous region of about 650,000 people have been designated as "red zones," with access restricted almost exclusively to emergency workers.

Authorities have ordered most establishments to close with the exception of casinos, which are Macao's main revenue generator and among the city's largest employers.

City residents will have to undergo three citywide COVID-19 tests this week. The local outbreak is Macao's largest since the pandemic began, with more than 900 infections reported since mid-June.

Neighboring Hong Kong has also seen a rising trend of coronavirus infections since mid-June. In the past seven days, daily infections reported averaged about 2,000 a day.

The city's new leader, John Lee, said Wednesday that Hong Kong must not "lie flat" when it comes to COVID-19, rejecting the "living with the coronavirus" mentality that most of the world has adopted.

His comments echo the sentiments of Chinese authorities, who have stuck with their "zero-COVID" policy that has become closely identified with President and head of the ruling Communist Party Xi Jinping.

However, Lee has said that Hong Kong authorities are exploring options, including shortening the duration of mandatory quarantine for incoming travelers. Currently, travelers must test negative for COVID-19 before flying and quarantine for seven days in designated hotels upon arrival.

The city, once known as a bustling business hub and international financial center, has seen tourism and business travel crippled by its tough entry restrictions.

The strict measures have remained in place despite relatively low case numbers and the serious negative effects on China's economy and global supply chains.

The World Health Organization recently called the policy unsustainable, a view Chinese officials rejected outright even while they say they hope to minimize the impact.

While China's borders remain largely closed, cutting off both visitors from abroad and outbound tourism, officials have cautiously increased flights from some foreign countries, most recently Russia.

Mainland China reported 353 cases of domestic transmission on Wednesday, 241 of them asymptomatic.

Shanghai announced just 24 cases over the past 24 hours, and Beijing five. Anhui announced 222 cases in what appears to be the latest cluster, prompting the inland province to order mass testing and travel restrictions in Si county, where the bulk of cases have been reported.

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HEADLINE	<b>07/05 Pediatric Covid cases back on the rise</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/Health/pediatric-covid-19-cases-back-rise-time/story?id=86259070">https://abcnews.go.com/Health/pediatric-covid-19-cases-back-rise-time/story?id=86259070</a>
GIST	<p>As more infectious COVID-19 variants become dominant in the U.S., there are renewed signs that COVID-19 cases may be back on the rise across parts of the country.</p> <p>The national resurgence comes as the number of children testing positive for the virus also sees an increase again.</p> <p>New infections among children had been on the decline since May, however, for the first time in nearly two months, there has been an uptick in the weekly total of pediatric COVID-19 cases.</p> <p>Last week, nearly 76,000 children tested positive for the virus, up from the 63,000 pediatric cases reported the week prior, according to a new report from the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Children's Hospital Association.</p> <p>Overall, totals remain significantly lower than during other parts of the pandemic. However, the organizations said that child cases are still "far higher" than one year ago, when just 12,100 cases were reported.</p>

Many Americans, who are taking at-home tests, are also not submitting their results, and thus, experts said daily case totals are likely significantly higher than the numbers that are officially reported.

Approximately 13.8 million children have tested positive for the virus, since the onset of the pandemic. Approximately 5.9 million reported cases have been added so far this year. Children represent about a fifth of all reported cases on record.

COVID-19 related hospitalizations among children are also on the rise, with admission levels also reaching their highest point since February, federal data shows.

Late last month, all children, six months and older, became eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine — a welcome development in the fight against the pandemic that many parents had been eagerly awaiting.

Although it is still unknown how many children between the ages of six months and four years old have been vaccinated, data shows that the vaccine rollout in older children continues to lag.

Over 25 million children, over the age of five, who have been eligible for a shot since November, are still unvaccinated.

"It is critical that we protect our children and teens from the complications of severe COVID-19 disease," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky said in a statement last month. "Vaccinating this age group can provide greater confidence to families that their children and adolescents participating in childcare, school, and other activities will have less risk for serious COVID-19 illness."

Despite continued encouragement from scientists and federal health officials, overall, less than half of children ages 5 to 17 — about 44.4% that age group — have been fully vaccinated.

An even small proportion — 38.6% — of children over 5, who are eligible for a booster, have received their supplemental shot.

The American Academy of Pediatrics and the Children's Hospital Association noted in their report that there is an "urgent" need to collect more age-specific data to assess the severity of illness related to new variants as well as potential longer-term effects.

"It is important to recognize there are immediate effects of the pandemic on children's health, but importantly we need to identify and address the long-lasting impacts on the physical, mental, and social well-being of this generation of children and youth," the organizations said.

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HEADLINE	<b>07/05 Canada to trash 13.6M vaccine doses</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/canada-throw-136m-doses-astrazeneca-vaccine-86270891">https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/canada-throw-136m-doses-astrazeneca-vaccine-86270891</a>
GIST	<p>OTTAWA -- Canada is going to throw out about 13.6 million doses of the Oxford-AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine because it couldn't find any takers for it either at home or abroad.</p> <p>Canada signed a contract with AstraZeneca in 2020 to get 20 million doses of its vaccine, and 2.3 million Canadians received at least one dose of it, mostly between March and June 2021.</p> <p>Following concerns in the spring of 2021 about rare but potentially fatal blood clots from AstraZeneca, Canada focused on using its ample supplies of the mRNA vaccines from Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna.</p> <p>In July 2021, Canada promised to donate the rest of its procured supply, about 17.7 million doses. But in a statement Tuesday, Health Canada said that despite efforts to meet that pledge, 13.6 million doses have expired and will have to be thrown out.</p>

	<p>“Due to limited demand for the vaccine and recipient country challenges with distribution and absorption, they were not accepted,” the statement said.</p> <p>In all, Canada donated 8.9 million doses of AstraZeneca vaccine — 4.8 million doses from its main supply and 4.1 million doses that it bought from the COVAX vaccine-sharing program.</p> <p>About 85% of Canadians are considered fully vaccinated, compared with 61% of the world’s population, and just 16% of people living in the world’s poorest countries.</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>07/06 Sydney: rain eases, floods still threatening</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/homes-85000-people-risk-rain-eases-sydney-86274148">https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/homes-85000-people-risk-rain-eases-sydney-86274148</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>SYDNEY -- Floodwaters had inundated or were threatening the homes of 85,000 people around Sydney on Wednesday as rivers started to recede and the heavy rains tracked north of Australia’s largest city.</p> <p>While rain was easing across Sydney, several waterways including the Hawkesbury-Nepean rivers system on Sydney’s northern and western fringes remained at major flood levels, Emergency Services Minister Steph Cooke said.</p> <p>Emergency responders knocked on doors overnight in the towns of Singleton and Muswellbrook, in the Hunter Valley north of Sydney, to order residents to evacuate, she said.</p> <p>“For many, it has been a sleepless night,” Cooke said.</p> <p>Evacuation orders and official warnings to prepare to abandon homes were given to 85,000 people by Wednesday, up from 50,000 on Tuesday, New South Wales state Premier Dominic Perrottet said.</p> <p>On the fifth day of the flood emergency, Perrottet warned that homes that remained dry during previous floods could be inundated this week.</p> <p>“This event is far from over. Please don’t have that past experience inform your current behavior,” Perrottet said.</p> <p>Federal funding would be available to flood victims from Thursday, less than two days after a disaster was declared in 23 local government areas, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said.</p> <p>“This is, I believe, the quickest that these payments have ever been approved,” Albanese said.</p> <p>Albanese said the fourth major flood event across Sydney and its surrounds since March last year that followed devastating wildfires in the same region during the 2019-2020 Southern Hemisphere summer were evidence of the need for climate action.</p> <p>“We are looking at long-term solutions. My government has changed Australia’s position on climate change from day one,” he said.</p> <p>Albanese’s center-left Labor Party was elected in May on a promise to cut Australia’s greenhouse gas emissions by 43% below 2005 levels by the end of the decade. The previous conservative government had promised a reduction of between 26% and 28%.</p> <p>“What we know is that Australia has always been subject of floods, of bushfires, but we know that the science told us that if we continued to not take action, globally, on climate change, then ... extreme weather events would be more often and more intense. And what we’re seeing, unfortunately, is that play out,” Albanese added.</p>

	<p>When Parliament resumes on July 26 for the first time since the election, the government will propose spending 4.8 billion Australian dollars (\$3.3 billion) on disaster mitigation measures such as building higher river levees, Albanese said.</p> <p>Bureau of Meteorology manager Jane Golding said the weather pattern that brought heavy rain to Sydney since Friday has moved off the coast north of the city of 5 million people.</p> <p>Heavy rain fell in the last 24 hours as far north as Coffs Harbor, 450 kilometers (280 miles) from Sydney, Golding said.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/05 Some Russians persist in war protests</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/russians-half-war-protests-arrest-fears-86284347">https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/russians-half-war-protests-arrest-fears-86284347</a>
GIST	<p>Ever since Russia invaded Ukraine, Anastasia has started her day by composing an anti-war message and posting it on the wall at the entrance of her apartment block in the industrial city of Perm in the Ural Mountains.</p> <p>“Do not believe the propaganda you see on the TV, read independent media!” reads one. “Violence and death have been constantly with us for three months now — take care of yourselves” reads another.</p> <p>The 31-year-old teacher, who asked to be identified only by her first name because she fears for her security, said she wanted “a safe and simple method of getting a message across.”</p> <p>“I couldn’t do something huge and public,” she told The Associated Press in a telephone interview. “I want to get people to think. And I think we should influence whatever space, in whatever way we can.”</p> <p>Despite a massive government crackdown on such acts of protest, some Russians have persisted in speaking out against the invasion — even in the simplest of ways.</p> <p>Some have paid a heavy price. In the early, wintry days of the invasion in February, authorities moved quickly to quash demonstrations, arresting people who marched or even held blank signs or other oblique references to the conflict. Critical media outlets were shut down as the government sought to control the narrative. Political opponents were singled out by President Vladimir Putin or commentators on state-run TV.</p> <p>Lawmakers rubber-stamped measures that outlawed the spread of “false information” about what the Kremlin called a “special military operation” and disparaging the military, using them against anyone who spoke out against the attack or talked about the atrocities Russian troops were alleged to have committed.</p> <p>As the war has dragged on into the languid days of a Russian summer, some like Anastasia feel guilty that they cannot do more to oppose the invasion, even within the constraints of the new laws.</p> <p>When Russian troops rolled in Ukraine on Feb. 24, Anastasia said her first thought was to sell all her possessions and move abroad, but she soon changed her mind.</p> <p>“It’s my country, why should I leave?” she told AP. “I understood I needed to stay and create something to help from here.”</p> <p>Sergei Besov, a Moscow-based printer and artist, also felt he couldn’t stay silent. Even before the invasion, the 45-year-old was making posters reflecting on the political scene and plastering them around the capital.</p> <p>When Russians voted two years ago on constitutional amendments allowing Putin to seek two more terms after 2024, Besov used his old printing press with hefty wooden Cyrillic type and vintage red ink to print posters that said simply: “Against.”</p>

During the 2020 unrest in Belarus over a disputed presidential election and the ensuing crackdown on the protesters, he made posters saying “Freedom” in Belarusian.

After the invasion of Ukraine, his project, Partisan Press, started making posters saying “No to war” – the main anti-war slogan. Video of the poster being printed became popular on Instagram, and demand for copies was so great that they were given away for free.

After some of his posters were used at a demonstration in Red Square and some people displaying them were arrested, it became clear that the police “would inevitably come to us,” Besov said.

They showed up when Besov wasn’t there, charging two of his employees with participating in an unauthorized rally by printing the poster used in it.

The case has dragged on for over three months, he said, causing all of them lots of stress over whether they will be penalized and to what extent.

Besov has stopped printing the “No to war” posters and went for subtler messages such as “Fear is not an excuse to do nothing.”

He considers it important to keep speaking out.

“The problem is we don’t know where the lines are drawn,” Besov said. “It is known that they can prosecute you for certain things, but some manage to fly under the radar. Where is this line? It is very bad and really difficult.”

Sasha Skochilenko, a 31-year-old artist and musician in St. Petersburg, failed to stay under the radar and is facing severe consequences for what she thought was a relatively safe way to spread the word about the horrors of war: She was detained for replacing five price tags in a supermarket with tiny ones containing anti-war slogans.

“The Russian army bombed an arts schools in Mariupol. Some 400 people were hiding in it from the shelling,” one read.

“Russian conscripts are being sent to Ukraine. Lives of our children are the price of this war,” said another one.

Skochilenko was really affected by the war, said her partner, Sophia Subbotina.

“She had friends in Kyiv who were sheltering in the subway and calling her, talking about the horror that was going on there,” Subbotina told AP.

In 2020, Skochilenko taught acting and filmmaking at a children’s camp in Ukraine and worried how the conflict would affect her former pupils.

“She was really afraid for these children, that their lives were in danger because of the war, that bombs were falling on them, and she couldn’t stay silent,” Subbotina said.

Skochilenko faces up to 10 years in prison on charges of spreading false information about the Russian army.

“It was a shock for us that they launched a criminal case, and a case that implies a monstrous prison term of 5 to 10 years,” Subbotina said. “In our country, shorter sentences are handed down for murder.”

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SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/nato-poised-sign-accession-protocols-sweden-finland-86221275">https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/nato-poised-sign-accession-protocols-sweden-finland-86221275</a>
GIST	<p>BRUSSELS -- The 30 NATO allies signed off on the accession protocols for Sweden and Finland on Tuesday, sending the membership bids of the two nations to the alliance capitals for legislative approvals — and possible political trouble in Turkey.</p> <p>The move further increases Russia's strategic isolation in the wake of its invasion of neighboring Ukraine in February and military struggles there since.</p> <p>“This is truly a historic moment for Finland, for Sweden and for NATO,” the head of the alliance, Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg, said.</p> <p>The 30 ambassadors and permanent representatives formally approved decisions made at a NATO summit in Madrid last week, when the leaders of member nations invited Russia’s neighbor Finland and Scandinavian partner Sweden to join the military club.</p> <p>Securing parliamentary approval for the new members in Turkey, however, could still pose a problem even though Sweden, Finland and Turkey reached a memorandum of understanding at the Madrid summit.</p> <p>Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan warned that Ankara could block the process if the two countries failed to grant Turkey’s demands for the extradition of people it views as terror suspects. The people wanted in Turkey have links to outlawed Kurdish groups or the network of an exiled cleric accused of a failed 2016 coup in Turkey.</p> <p>He said Turkey’s Parliament could refuse to ratify the deal. It is a potent threat since NATO accession must be formally approved by all 30 member states, which gives each a blocking right.</p> <p>Stoltenberg said he expected no change of heart. “There were security concerns that needed to be addressed. And we did what we always do at NATO. We found common ground,” he said.</p> <p>The Russian invasion of Ukraine has given the process added urgency. It will ensconce the two nations in the Western military alliance and give NATO more clout, especially in the face of Moscow’s military threat.</p> <p>“We will be even stronger and our people will be even safer as we face the biggest security crisis in decades,” Stoltenberg said.</p> <p>At a news conference, the foreign ministers of Sweden and Finland were asked whether the memorandum specified people who would have to be extradited to Turkey. Both ministers said no such list was part of the agreement.</p> <p>“We will honor the memorandum fully. There is, of course, no lists or anything like that in the memorandum, but what we will do is to have better cooperation when it comes to terrorists,” Swedish Foreign Minister Ann Linde said.</p> <p>Finnish Foreign Minister Pekka Haavisto was equally adamant.</p> <p>“Everything that was agreed in Madrid is stated in the document. There are no hidden documents behind that or any agreements behind that,” Haavisto said.</p> <p>Every alliance nation has different legislative challenges and procedures to deal with, and it could take several more months for the two Nordic nations to take their place as official NATO members.</p> <p>Denmark and Canada were quickest out of the blocks. They handed over their ratification documents in Washington as the first NATO countries just hours after the accession protocols were signed in Brussels, Danish Foreign Minister Jeppe Kofod told The Associated Press by phone.</p>

	<p>“It was a good signal not only to Sweden and Finland, but to other NATO countries that the speed of ratification is important,” he said. “We hope this inspires other countries to react fast.”</p> <p>The documents need to be handed over in Washington because NATO's founding treaty was signed there in 1949.</p> <p>Germany's parliament is set to ratify the membership bids Friday, according to the Free Democrats, a partner party in the country's coalition government. Other parliaments might only get to the approval process after long summer breaks.</p> <p>“I look forward to a swift ratification process,” Haavisto said.</p> <p>In the meantime, the protocols approved Tuesday bring both nations deeper into NATO’s fold already. As close partners, they already attended some meetings that involved issues that immediately affected them. As official invitees, they can attend all meetings of the ambassadors even if they do not yet have any voting rights.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/05 Spain boosts military spending</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/spain-boosts-military-spending-close-gap-nato-goal-86233858">https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/spain-boosts-military-spending-close-gap-nato-goal-86233858</a>
GIST	<p>BARCELONA, Spain -- Spain is increasing military spending as it works toward meeting a NATO commitment by dedicating 2% of gross domestic product to defense, the government said Tuesday.</p> <p>Cabinet members approved a one-off expenditure of almost 1 billion euros (around \$1.04 billion) for Spain's Defense Ministry that the government said was needed to cover unexpected expenses produced by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.</p> <p>Spain has sent military and humanitarian aid to Ukraine, and deployed more troops and aircraft to NATO missions in Eastern Europe.</p> <p>NATO leaders agreed at a summit held in Madrid last week to expand their efforts to get all alliance members up to the 2% of GDP mark. Currently, only nine of the Western military alliance's 30 members meet or surpass that goal.</p> <p>Spain pledged at a NATO summit held in Madrid last week that it would reach the 2% of GDP goal by 2029. That would mean doubling its budget for military spending from the current 13 billion euros (\$13.4 billion) to 26 billion euros (\$27 billion) in seven years.</p> <p>Spain currently spends 1% of its GDP on defense. Only Luxembourg spends a lower percentage of GDP on defense than Spain in the North Atlantic alliance, according to NATO.</p> <p>The U.S., which provides the bulk of NATO forces, has had a long-standing complaint that several of its European allies don’t pitch it enough. Spain, for example, has tried to compensate for underspending by contributing troops, planes and ships to NATO missions.</p> <p>Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in February has sparked a rearmament movement across many European countries. Germany, which until now has only spent 1.4% of its GDP on defense, has approved a 100 billion-euro (\$107 billion) special fund to strengthen the country’s military.</p> <p>NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said at last week’s summit that the allies have reaffirmed their commitment to the 2% minimum. He said that 19 members have pledged to meet it by 2024, with the remaining five, including Spain, to then follow.</p>

	<p>“Two percent is increasingly considered a floor, not a ceiling,” Stoltenberg said at the summit where NATO declared Russia as its top threat and described China’s growing military ambitions as a “challenge.”</p> <p>Spain's decision designed to show NATO that it is serious about spending more on its armed forces risks causing friction within its left-wing governing coalition, which doesn't hold a majority in parliament.</p> <p>The government’s junior member, United We Can, is firmly opposed more spending on the military sought by Socialist Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez. The left-wing party has called for a meeting of the coalition to discuss its spending priorities.</p> <p>Government spokeswoman Isabel Rodríguez said after the Cabinet meeting that the military funding approved Tuesday was adopted "as part of our commitment to a clear and firm response to (the) invasion of Ukraine and to meet the extraordinary costs for our armed forces created by the war.”</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/05 Feds shutter beagles’ breeding facility</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/judge-oks-transfer-plan-beagles-troubled-facility-86267382">https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/judge-oks-transfer-plan-beagles-troubled-facility-86267382</a>
GIST	<p>CUMBERLAND, Va. -- A federal judge on Tuesday approved a plan that calls for transferring about 4,000 dogs currently housed at a troubled Virginia breeding facility to shelters where they can be adopted, according to court records.</p> <p>The development came in a civil enforcement case the federal government initiated in May against Envigo RMS, which owns and operates the facility in Cumberland that breeds beagles for medical research.</p> <p>After federal officials accused the company of a series of animal welfare violations, U.S. District Court Judge Norman Moon issued a restraining order imposing a series of restrictions on the facility. In June, company officials announced plans to close it.</p> <p>On Friday, Envigo and the government jointly filed a transfer plan that called for the removal of “all” of the facility's beagles by the Humane Society of the United States, which will transport the dogs to shelters where they can be adopted.</p> <p>According to court documents, Envigo will cover a monetary fee for each dog to help defray the costs to the shelters of preparing the beagles for adoption.</p> <p>Court records show Moon issued an oral order approving the transfer plan Tuesday. The removal process is expected to take about 60 days, according to the draft plan.</p> <p>Hundreds of dogs determined to be in “acute distress” had already been seized from the facility.</p> <p>People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, the Norfolk-based animal rights group that had investigated the facility, celebrated Tuesday's development.</p> <p>“Envigo’s surviving victims will soon be given the opportunity to have what every dog deserves — the freedom to enjoy life, love, and respect for their individuality as members of a family home,” PETA Senior Vice President of Cruelty Investigations Daphna Nachminovitch said in a statement.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/05 ‘Points-system’ to clear encampments</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.q13fox.com/news/documents-show-seattle-using-points-based-system-to-remove-homeless-encampments">https://www.q13fox.com/news/documents-show-seattle-using-points-based-system-to-remove-homeless-encampments</a>
GIST	<p><b>SEATTLE</b> - New information has come to light on a point-based system the <a href="#">City of Seattle</a> is testing to decide which <a href="#">homeless encampments</a> should be removed first.</p>

The information came to light after [Publicola released a PowerPoint](#) as part public disclosure request, originally intended to be an internal document for city staff.

It showcases the debate within the City about how to handle tent and RV encampment removals.

Mayor [Bruce Harrell](#) pulled the wraps off his administration's [homelessness response strategy on May 31](#). On that day, he hinted about a prioritization system to aid in the decision-making process on which camps should be removed first.

"We have criteria by which we will measure the areas we will clean up," he said at the time. But details of those criteria were not made public until Tuesday.

Situations like a tent blocking wheelchair access on a sidewalk would receive 2 points. Blocking a business entrance, large amount of debris, near children, elderly and a park would each get 1 point.

Blocking traffic site lines, near a waterway, a chemical hazard or having more than two fires year-to-date and shots fired year-to-date would be scored as 1 point each.

If there was a fire in the last 10 days, the score increases by 2 points.

However, the points climb dramatically if gun violence is involved. If shots were fired in the last 10 days, that's 4 points. If someone was shot and killed at any time, that nets 5 points.

If that fatality happened in the last 10 day, that's 8 points, the highest points possible in any category.

The document also raises the question on how much the public should be told about the system.

On one page entitled 'Why do we need a prioritization system?' reads, "We need to be able to tell the public why we are addressing site A over site B."

The next line reads, "Decision Point: should the public be able to go on the dashboard and see where their site stands in priority to others?"

During a press only briefing made just prior to the mayor's May 31 announcement, Deputy Mayor for Homelessness Tiffany Washington suggest the city was refining criteria for 'stakeholders' to decide the priority for camp clear outs.

Those stakeholders now have a name. They are the Unified Care Team, made up of nearly 60 individuals—according to Publicola—from various city departments and the King County Regional Homelessness Authority.

Washington said that she would make the final decision on which camps would be targeted for removal and when.

When asked to confirm the prioritization system, Harrell's spokesperson Jamie Housen told FOX 13 News the PowerPoint presentation appeared authentic and said, "The system is currently being tested and frequently refined as we learn more, to ensure the right information is driving decisions."

It's unclear when the PowerPoint was produced, but it appears to contain information later than mid-April.

It said the number one RV encampment with the most issues was the one next to the First South Bridge in South Seattle.

"I mean it's horrible; it's bad, it stinks, people shouldn't live like this," said Richard, who has lived on-and-off at the camp for years, and is staying with a friend who lives at the camp.

	<p>There's evidence of chop shop, swarms of flying moving about the tons of visible garbage, and clearly people in behavioral distress.</p> <p>"There's drugs, prostitution, shootings, stabbings, anything you can find that's criminal happens here," said Richard.</p> <p>The camp sits on slivers of land owned by the City of Seattle, King County and the Washington State Department of Transportation. That fractured responsibility has played a role the in camp lasting for several years.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/05 WA rent prices jumped 8% since Jan.</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.krem.com/article/money/economy/boomtown-inland-northwest/washington-average-rent-price/293-25a17d20-3716-4bfc-8b18-18de34a2d424">https://www.krem.com/article/money/economy/boomtown-inland-northwest/washington-average-rent-price/293-25a17d20-3716-4bfc-8b18-18de34a2d424</a>
GIST	<p>SPOKANE, Wash. — The average price of a one-bedroom apartment in Washington state has increased 8% in the last six months, according to a study by <a href="#">QuoteWizard</a>.</p> <p>The average rent for a one-bedroom apartment in Washington state is \$1,360 per month. That's an 8% increase from January 2022 and a 19% increase from 2020.</p> <p>In Seattle, the average price of a one-bedroom apartment is \$1,667, a 7% increase from January 2022 and an 8% increase from 2020.</p> <p>The study also found that 48% of Washington renters spend more than 30% of their monthly income on rent.</p> <p>In a recent study from the <a href="#">National Low Income Housing Coalition</a>, fair market rent for a 2-bedroom apartment in Spokane is \$1,007, which is 89% higher than other fair market rent areas.</p> <p>Spokane has the <a href="#">highest rent increases</a> in the state of Washington and is in the top three for highest rent spikes nationwide.</p> <p>Idaho and Maine are the two states where rent has risen the fastest. Rental prices have increased 9% in Idaho since January 2022 and 44% since 2020.</p> <p>46% of all Idaho renters spend more than 30% of their monthly income on rent.</p> <p>QuoteWizard lists the average rent in Idaho as \$945 per month. However, an April study from <a href="#">Rent.com</a> found that most Boise rentals go for more than \$2,000 per month and only 3% of rentals cost less than \$1,000 per month.</p>
	<a href="#">Return to Top</a> <i>To read the full study from QuoteWizard, <a href="#">click here</a>.</i>

HEADLINE	<b>07/05 Average gas prices in Spokane drop</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.krem.com/article/money/spokane-gas-prices-vouchers-stations/293-efcbdbbd-b9d6-4d49-bdea-992b15779d36">https://www.krem.com/article/money/spokane-gas-prices-vouchers-stations/293-efcbdbbd-b9d6-4d49-bdea-992b15779d36</a>
GIST	<p>SPOKANE COUNTY, Wash. — Average gas prices in Spokane are down 5.7 cents per gallon in the last week, bringing Spokane's average price to \$5.14 per gallon as of Tuesday, according to GasBuddy's weekly survey of 187 stations in Spokane.</p> <p>In the U.S., the national average gas price has gone down 10.4 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$4.78 per gallon as of Tuesday.</p>

<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	<p>The national average is down 7.2 cents per gallon from a month ago and stands \$1.66 per gallon higher than a year ago, according to GasBuddy data.</p> <p>Gas prices in Spokane are 7.1 cents per gallon higher than a month ago as of Tuesday, July 5. According to the GasBuddy survey, the cheapest gas in Spokane on Monday was \$4.93 a gallon, while the most expensive was \$5.39 per gallon, a difference of 46 cents per gallon.</p> <p>Washington's average gas price currently stands at \$5.40 per gallon. This is a 7-cent decrease from last week, according to GasBuddy.</p> <p>In Idaho, the average price of gas last week was \$5.19 a gallon compared to \$5.24 as of Tuesday. In Yakima, the average price per gallon went down 7.2 cents in a week, from \$5.32 per gallon to \$5.25 a gallon as of Tuesday.</p> <p>The price of diesel has also fallen 6.3 cents nationally in the past week and stands at \$5.72 per gallon, according to GasBuddy weekly press release.</p> <p>Patrick De Haan, GasBuddy's head of petroleum analysis, said the average gas prices have fallen to their lowest level in over a month, which has provided price relief to millions of Americans that hit the road for the holiday weekend.</p> <p>"While we may see prices decline into this week, the drop could fade soon if oil prices reverse, especially with strong demand over the holiday," De Haan said in a statement. "For the time being, Americans are spending nearly \$100 million per day less on gasoline than when prices peaked a few weeks ago, and that's well-needed relief at a time when gas prices remain near records."</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>07/05 Gas prices drop in Seattle, WA state</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://komonews.com/news/local/gas-prices-drop-since-last-week-in-seattle-washington-state">https://komonews.com/news/local/gas-prices-drop-since-last-week-in-seattle-washington-state</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>SEATTLE — Gas prices in Seattle dropped 5.6 cents a gallon since last week, bringing the city's average to \$5.59 per gallon as of Tuesday, <a href="#">according to GasBuddy's</a> survey of 775 stations in the city.</p> <p>Prices in Seattle are still 11.6 cents per gallon higher than a month ago and \$1.72 per gallon higher than a year ago.</p> <p>The price of diesel has fallen 6.3 cents nationally in the past week and stands at \$5.72 per gallon.</p> <p>Nationally, the average price of gas decreased by 10.4 cents per gallon since last week to \$4.78.</p> <p>Tacoma (\$5.35 per gallon, down 9.4 cents per gallon since last week), Yakima (\$5.25, down 7.2 cents) and Washington state (\$5.40, down 7 cents) all saw similar trends.</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>07/05 No new mask mandate Pierce Co. for now</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/no-new-mask-mandate-pierce-county-despite-rising-covid-19-cases/ONNHS76E0FDZPMGF2AJ2B3FDVI/">https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/no-new-mask-mandate-pierce-county-despite-rising-covid-19-cases/ONNHS76E0FDZPMGF2AJ2B3FDVI/</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>PIERCE COUNTY, Wash. — The CDC says people in 15 Washington counties should begin wearing masks indoors again due to high COVID-19 transmission.</p> <p>So far, the state is not issuing an indoor mask mandate.</p> <p>An infectious disease doctor at Mary Bridge Children's Hospital does not believe a mask mandate would work.</p>



But is COVID-19 spreading? Absolutely. And she thinks that when you go into a store like this one, you probably should put a mask on.

It's not as if no one in Tacoma is wearing a mask to ward off COVID-19, especially those using mass transit.

"Now, I wear it on the bus mostly," said Ginette, her mask pulled down to her chin.

"I don't think we need COVID for people to want to feel safe for some sort of facial covering," said Henry Johnson, "because it's dirty without the disease of COVID. But I do like to see everybody wearing a mask and practicing safety."

According to the Centers for Disease Control, it may be time to do just that, especially indoors.

A map shows the 15 counties where the CDC says COVID-19 transmission is high. In eastern Washington — Spokane and eight other counties; on the west side — six counties, including Pierce.

"There are some lags in data in knowing what the circulation is," said Dr. Mary Fairchok, a pediatric infectious disease specialist at Mary Bridge Children's Hospital.

She said that is likely why health officials can differ in their assessments.

Either way, Dr. Fairchok added, "I think rates are really quite high right now. And I personally do wear a mask when I go into crowded spaces like supermarkets or church or restaurants as much as possible. Because I know the rates are very high. And I'd just rather not get COVID."

Still, she doesn't think another mask mandate would work unless more people are like Tony Haynes, who says he still wears one when he feels it is necessary.

"Oh, I'm tired of it," Haynes said. "It's not my first choice by any stretch of the imagination. But I don't know everybody's conditions. And I'll give them the respect that they are compromised in some way, I'll do everything I can to keep them safe."

The local health department is recommending that people continue to wear masks in crowded indoor places.

That hasn't changed — it has always recommended that.

But — at least for now — there is no mask mandate.

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HEADLINE	<b>07/05 King Co. blocks out-of-state cooperation</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/king-county-wont-help-out-of-state-police-enforce-abortion-bans/VBUK635XUFAIJENLB5AEMSPRGM/">https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/king-county-wont-help-out-of-state-police-enforce-abortion-bans/VBUK635XUFAIJENLB5AEMSPRGM/</a>
GIST	<p>KING COUNTY, Wash. — On Tuesday, King County Executive Dow Constantine signed an executive order prohibiting certain public servants from helping police outside Washington enforce bans on abortion.</p> <p>The order specifically prevents sheriff's deputies and detention and public health workers from assisting other states in carrying out restrictions on abortion.</p> <p>"When Idaho, Texas, Ohio, Missouri or any other jurisdictions decide to hunt down and prosecute their residents for seeking abortion care, those jurisdictions will get no help from King County," Constantine said. The order came soon after the Metropolitan King County Council voted 8-1 to send \$500,000 to the Northwest Abortion Access fund, which helps people traveling for health care services.</p>

<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	<p>Only councilmember Reagan Dunn voted no.</p> <p>“This is a short-term emergency response to a problem that was created by the Supreme Court decision,” Council Chair Claudia Balducci said.</p> <p>Brad Payne of the Family Policy Institute of Washington said the money should be spent elsewhere.</p> <p>“I would be much more thrilled if the amount of money being put toward abortion services was being redirected towards adoption services,” Payne said.</p> <p>Planned Parenthood predicts a 385% increase in women coming to Washington for abortions.</p> <p>“We’re seeing patients from all over the country already,” said Jennifer Allen of Planned Parenthood Alliance Advocates, who joined Senator Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.) for a news conference Tuesday at the University of Washington.</p> <p>Cantwell said she is seeking answers from the U.S. Department of Justice about how laws in other states might put Washington health care workers at risk.</p> <p>“What I don’t like about this situation is the chilling effect,” she said. “It is almost saying to people, ‘you can’t take the risk of providing this service. You don’t know who’s going to come after you.’”</p> <p>Cantwell said when she gets a response from the U.S. Attorney General, she will work on national legislation to protect the health care system if necessary.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/05 Amtrak service Seattle to B.C. returns Sep.</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/transportation/amtrak-service-from-seattle-to-b-c-returns-in-september/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/transportation/amtrak-service-from-seattle-to-b-c-returns-in-september/</a>
GIST	<p>Nearly 2 1/2 years since Amtrak’s cars went quiet at the beginning of the pandemic, passenger trains between Seattle and B.C. are set to return this September.</p> <p>The target date is a speedier one than had previously been announced; Amtrak said earlier it would not cross the border until December, highlighting staffing and equipment shortages.</p> <p>That timeline displeased state transportation officials. Roger Millar and Kris Strickler, the top transportation leaders in Washington and Oregon, respectively, called a December restart “unacceptable,” citing the return of service in other parts of the country.</p> <p>“Amtrak’s lack of support for the Amtrak Cascades service cannot continue, and Amtrak’s plans to delay the re-start of Canadian service for seven months or more is not acceptable to WSDOT and ODOT,” Millar and Strickler said in a May letter to Stephen Gardner, president and CEO of Amtrak. “The states expect some level of train service to resume between Seattle and Vancouver, B.C. sooner than Amtrak’s letter suggests.”</p> <p>Service first halted in March 2020, as travel dried up and the border between the U.S. and Canada closed. The border fully reopened in both directions last November, but while drivers and air passengers came and went, the trains did not return.</p> <p>Amtrak has previously blamed staffing shortages for the slow return. In an emailed statement, spokesperson Olivia Irvin did not specify what changed in recent weeks.</p> <p>“Earlier plans called for a December return to Canada, but Amtrak was able to advance the schedule,” she said.</p>

	<p>Before the pandemic, nearly 160,000 people traveled by train between Seattle and Vancouver per year, with many more riding between the towns along the way. In lieu of trains, Amtrak offered some bus service to Vancouver from Seattle.</p> <p>The Washington State Department of Transportation is currently operating two buses that travel between Seattle and Bellingham, with stops along the way.</p> <p>Washington state legislators budgeted \$150 million this year to study high-speed rail between British Columbia and Oregon. The money will only be spent if it is matched with federal dollars.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/05 Seattle public schools enrollment plummets</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/education/lab/student-enrollment-in-seattle-continues-to-drop-heres-what-it-means/">https://www.seattletimes.com/education/lab/student-enrollment-in-seattle-continues-to-drop-heres-what-it-means/</a>
GIST	<p>Seattle's plummeting school enrollment is starting to cause money problems for the state's largest school district, and officials worry the students who left won't come back.</p> <p>Student enrollment at Seattle Public Schools has continued to drop the last two years. In the fall, the district expects the smallest number of students it's seen in the last seven years, <a href="#">according to district projections</a>.</p> <p>Those enrollment changes are expected to lead to staffing shifts next fall in elementary schools in Seattle's wealthier neighborhoods. Those schools lost the most students, likely because parents with money could afford to send their children elsewhere. The problem is not unique to Seattle; school districts across the country have experienced budget crises because of enrollment drops caused by the pandemic.</p> <p>The Seattle School Board on Wednesday will vote to approve a <a href="#">\$1.6 billion budget</a> for the upcoming school year.</p> <p>School districts receive money from the state based on the number of students enrolled, so a drop in enrollment means less money.</p> <p>The enrollment decline at schools in wealthier neighborhoods, when compared with schools in low-income areas, has been dramatic, said JoLynn Berge, assistant superintendent of business and finance at Seattle Schools.</p> <p>"I do think in Seattle we have a high degree of wealth and privilege and a higher instance of opportunity," Berge said in an interview. In the metro area, there are more private school choices for families — besides home-schooling — than other parts of the state.</p> <p>The district's budget is split up into four components. The general fund makes up the bulk of the budget, \$1.14 billion, and is used for everyday operations, such as educational programs, salaries, technology and transportation.</p> <p>The rest of the money comes from Associated Student Body funds that are raised by students to support extracurricular activities, capital project funds that go toward building renovations and construction, and debt service funds to pay the interest and principal on bonds issued.</p> <p>The district expected enrollment to decline over time because of a falling birthrate, but it happened sooner than expected because of the pandemic, Berge said. "You get a huge hit from the pandemic and it kind of magnifies those impacts."</p> <p>In the last two years, Seattle had a 6.4% enrollment drop, Berge said, almost double the state's 3.4% decline.</p>

In other ways, the proposed school budget for the 2022-23 school year is more reflective of a return to “basically normal operations,” said Linda Sebring, the district’s budget director, during the June 22 School Board meeting.

For example, she said, the district proposes to spend less money on technology in the upcoming school year compared with this past year, when the district needed to invest in laptops for students and staff.

Other than the money used for general education, special education is the next-highest category of spending. The district budgeted nearly \$192 million in special education the last school year and proposes to increase that by \$12 million for 2022-23. Compensatory education, which pays for supplementary services for students with disabilities, was budgeted for \$47 million the last school year and is staying about the same.

Students in special education are staying enrolled at a higher rate than students in general education, Berge said, and that’s reflected in the proposed budget.

“The enrollment loss is not proportional,” Berge said during the June board meeting. “We’re not losing children in special education. The other thing that we know is children who receive special education services are not the children who go to private school or leave our district.”

Money spent on the English language learner program is also near the top of the list. About \$38 million was budgeted for the 2021-22 school year and will increase by \$4 million if the proposed budget is passed.

Seattle Schools is also dialing back its spending of the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief stimulus funds received through the federal American Rescue Plan Act. Seattle Schools allocated about \$61 million in ESSER funds in the last school year’s budget and is proposing to use only about \$17 million in the upcoming school year.

The district has spent about \$89.9 million in ESSER funds so far and has about \$55.2 million left. School districts need to use these funds by September 2024. Some funds will last through the 2023-24 school year, Berge said.

#### **What the enrollment declines may mean**

The district hit a seven-year peak in its enrollment in the 2019-20 school year with 52,793 students.

Enrollment has declined since that peak, and in the fall the district is planning for 48,748 students. The district typically budgets for more students than it serves.

One thing that will help blunt the impact this coming school year: State legislators approved temporary, one-time funds for school districts to supplement enrollment drops. Seattle Schools is receiving about \$18 million for the upcoming year.

“Our enrollment is not going to come roaring back,” Berge said. “In general, we’re going to have lower enrollment for a while.”

Because of enrollment drops, staff are being shuffled around the district based on the number of students at each of the 106 Seattle schools. This happens every school year, Berge said, because enrollment is always shifting. But recently some schools have lost more staff than others.

“During the pandemic, wealthier schools have seen the biggest staffing adjustments,” Berge said. “The higher poverty schools had the fewest reductions — they didn’t lose students at the same rate and I think that speaks to privilege and choice.”

Overall, high schools had the fewest staffing adjustments due to enrollment losses, Berge said. Staffing adjustments and enrollment declines affected elementary schools the most. The largest decline in students

was in kindergarten — about 600 to 700 kindergartners who were expected to enroll in 2021-22 never showed up, Berge said.

Educators don't know why kindergartners were the largest population to leave the district, although Washington's compulsory attendance age — students aren't required to attend school until they are 8 years old — could be a factor. But "What that says to us is, under these set of conditions [school during COVID-19] I'm either going to either pull my kid out, wait to see what happens, make a different choice, my work schedule or work from home has changed or whatever it might be," Berge said.

Young children weren't able to be vaccinated until later in the school year — a factor that could have stopped parents from sending kids to school, Berge said. Having to wear masks in school or social distancing were other concerns that parents may have considered.

"It's going to take us a while to either understand that those changes are going to be permanent or to return back to previous practice," Berge said. "How we've done things and what we can expect — all those things have changed. I think we're still learning about that."

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HEADLINE	<b>07/05 CDC, TPCHD differ Pierce Co. Covid 'level'</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.thenewtribune.com/news/coronavirus/article263180583.html">https://www.thenewtribune.com/news/coronavirus/article263180583.html</a>
GIST	<p>Pierce County is one of several Washington counties in the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's "high" community level for COVID-19.</p> <p>Thurston, Lewis, Pacific, Grays Harbor and Clallam counties also are among those in Western Washington at high level; Chelan, Douglas, Grant, Ferry, Lincoln, Spokane, Walla Walla, Columbia and Asotin also were ranked high as of July 5.</p> <p>Kitsap, Island, Yakima, Kittitas, Benton and Whitman were the only counties ranked at low level; the rest are at medium.</p> <p>The CDC ranks counties low, medium or high based on case rates above or below 200 per 100,000, new COVID hospital admissions and percentage of hospital beds used by COVID patients.</p> <p>Pierce County's case rate is more than 200 per 100,000, and new COVID-19 hospital admissions per 100,000 are at 10.2, the CDC reported Tuesday, with staffed inpatient beds in use by patients with confirmed COVID-19 at 8 percent.</p> <p>In the "high" level, CDC recommends residents mask up at indoor public spaces and public transportation, stay up to date on COVID vaccines/boosters, get tested if you have symptoms. People at higher risk for severe illness also should consider additional precautions.</p> <p>"People may choose to mask at any time. People with symptoms, a positive test, or exposure to someone with COVID-19 should wear a mask," the CDC said on its county risk-level page.</p> <p>Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, in its report Tuesday, said, "Our local numbers continue to show us in the medium level," because of "a slightly different data set and longer lag time for data than CDC uses for its community levels."</p> <p>According to TPCHD, Pierce County recorded 1,054 cases of COVID-19 for June 26-July 2 and 5 deaths. This week's report does not include a full week of data because of the July 4 holiday.</p> <p>Pierce County's total COVID-19 count is 206,360 cases and 1,389 deaths since the first case was reported in March 2020.</p>
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HEADLINE	07/05 FBI: using deepfakes snag remote IT jobs
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.helpnetsecurity.com/2022/07/05/deepfakes-remote-jobs/">https://www.helpnetsecurity.com/2022/07/05/deepfakes-remote-jobs/</a>
GIST	<p>Malicious individuals are using stolen personally identifiable information (PII) and voice and video deepfakes to try to land remote IT, programming, database and software-related jobs, the FBI has warned last week.</p> <p><b>The increasing malicious use of deepfakes</b></p> <p><a href="#">Deepfakes</a> are synthetic media – images, audio recordings, videos – that make it look like a person has been doing and saying things they haven’t done or said. There have also been known attempts of real-time deepfake attacks.</p> <p>Deepfakes are created with deep (machine) learning algorithms and generative adversarial networks, and they are becoming more difficult to spot by the day. Case in point: it took over 15 minutes and a set of unexpected questions and statements for the mayor of Berlin to <a href="#">begin to suspect</a> that a scheduled Webex video with someone that looked and sounded like Kyiv mayor Vitali Klitschko was, in fact, a deepfake-fuelled “attack.”</p> <p>Deepfake videos of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy have previously been <a href="#">leveraged</a> to sow distrust on the Ukrainian side of the ongoing conflict, but deepfakes can be a tool for disseminating disinformation with a wide variety of malicious goals in mind.</p> <p>For example, they are used to create involuntary deepfake pornography (including so-called revenge porn), hoaxes, and to perpetrate document fraud, <a href="#">theft</a>, fooling “know your customer” mechanisms, and <a href="#">more</a>.</p> <p>Researchers around the world are <a href="#">working on technologies</a> that will be able to reliably spot deepfake media, but as the quality of deepfakes improves, they are constantly playing catching-up. Also, these technologies are not enough to combat the spread of disinformation for ideological or political purposes; that side of the problem will have to be addressed via legislation, regulation, and education, as well as <a href="#">action by tech giants</a>.</p> <p><b>FBI’s warning</b></p> <p>The FBI’s warning tells about a recent increase in complaints they’ve been receiving of individuals using deepfakes and stolen PII to apply for a variety of remote jobs and work-at-home positions, some of which “include access to customer PII, financial data, corporate IT databases and/or proprietary information.”</p> <p>These individuals are using stolen PII to try to bypass pre-employment background checks, and voice spoofing – or potentially voice deepfakes – during online interviews.</p> <p>“In these interviews, the actions and lip movement of the person seen interviewed on-camera do not completely coordinate with the audio of the person speaking. At times, actions such as coughing, sneezing, or other auditory actions are not aligned with what is presented visually,” the FBI <a href="#">explained</a>.</p> <p>These discrepancies may be easy to notice, but also to dismiss due to the occasional frailty of audion and video communications. Organizations looking for IT professionals, programmers, software developers and database administrators are advised to take extra precautions to ensure they are not ensnared by these and <a href="#">other attackers</a>.</p>
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HEADLINE	07/05 Risk: people are primary attack vector
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SOURCE	<a href="https://www.helpnetsecurity.com/2022/07/05/people-primary-attack-vector/">https://www.helpnetsecurity.com/2022/07/05/people-primary-attack-vector/</a>
GIST	<p>With an unprecedented number of employees now working in <a href="#">hybrid or fully remote environments</a>, compounded by an increase in cyber threats and a more overwhelmed, COVID-19 information fatigued workforce, there has never been a more critical time to effectively create and maintain a cyber-secure workforce and an engaged <a href="#">security culture</a>.</p> <p>“People have become the primary attack vector for cyber-attackers around the world,” said <a href="#">Lance Spitzner</a>, SANS Security Awareness Director. “Humans rather than technology represent the greatest risk to organizations and the professionals who oversee security awareness programs are the key to effectively managing that risk.”</p> <p>“Awareness programs enable security teams to effectively manage their human risk by changing how people think about cybersecurity and help them exhibit secure behaviors, from the Board of Directors on down,” said Spitzner.</p> <p><b>Key findings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Workforce:</b> More than 69% of security awareness professionals are spending less than half their time on security awareness. The data shows that security awareness responsibilities are very commonly assigned to staff with highly technical backgrounds who may lack the skills needed to effectively engage their workforce in simple-to-understand terms.</li> <li>• <b>US compensation:</b> The average salary reported was \$110,309 USD for security training professionals, an increase from 2021. However, those dedicated full-time to awareness were paid on average only \$86,626, while those who are part-time averaged \$117,584 – \$30,000 difference. This difference is because people dedicated part-time to security awareness have their compensation based on their other responsibilities, which are usually more technically focused.</li> <li>• <b>Global compensation:</b> Security awareness professionals in Australia/New Zealand had the highest average annual compensation (\$121,236), while South America had the lowest (\$56,960). In North America, the higher the maturity level of an organization’s security awareness program, the higher the salary for the awareness professionals who work there.</li> <li>• <b>Top reported challenges:</b> The three top reported challenges for building a mature awareness program were all related to a lack of time: specifically Lack of time for project management, limits on training time to engage employees, and a lack of staffing.</li> <li>• <b>Pandemic impacts:</b> The top two reported impacts were the challenge of a more distracted and overwhelmed workforce and a working environment where human-based cyber-attacks have become more frequent and effective.</li> <li>• <b>Program maturity by region:</b> Consistent across all global regions is that current programs’ most common maturity levels are compliance-focused and awareness/behavior change.</li> <li>• <b>Successful program indicators:</b> Strong leadership support, increased team size, and a higher training frequency topped the charts as key enablers to program success.</li> </ul>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/05 DeFi platform reveals \$8.8M stolen</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://therecord.media/nearly-9-million-stolen-from-defi-platform-crema-finance/">https://therecord.media/nearly-9-million-stolen-from-defi-platform-crema-finance/</a>
GIST	<p>Decentralized finance platform Crema Finance announced that it was hacked on Saturday and had about \$8.8 million stolen during the attack.</p> <p>In a <a href="#">series of tweets</a> over the July 4 weekend, the company explained that the hacker used several novel tactics enabling them to take out six <a href="#">flash loans</a>, a common tactic of DeFi attackers.</p> <p>The company said it is now working with law enforcement and blockchain security companies to trace the stolen funds. In total, the hackers stole 69,500 SOL, which is worth about \$2.3 million and stablecoins worth about \$6.5 million.</p> <p>It sent a message to the hackers, offering them \$800,000 in exchange for the return of the stolen funds.</p>

“Your addresses on both Solana and Ethereum, have been blacklisted and all eyes are on you right now. You have 72h from now to consider becoming a white hat and keeping \$800k as the bounty,” the company said in a note to the hacker.

“And transfer remaining funds back to our contract-update-authority address. Otherwise the police and legal force will officially get involved and there will be endless tracing waiting for you.”

Several blockchain security companies showed that the hacker conducted the exploit by uploading a malicious on-chain program which could then be used to deploy multiple flash loan attacks.

Flash loan attacks are when a hacker uses a fast, uncollateralized loan to target vulnerabilities in a project’s design.

Flash loan attacks have become one of the most popular ways hackers target DeFi platforms. In April, hackers [stole \\$11.2 million](#) worth of Binance Coin from DeFi platform Elephant Money.

Cream Finance was hit with three different flash loan attacks in 2021, costing the DeFi platform [\\$130 million in October](#), [\\$37 million in February](#) and another [\\$29 million in August](#).

Blockchain analysis firm Chainalysis said [at least \\$2.2 billion](#) was stolen from DeFi protocols in 2021. Last month, the Ronin Network [announced](#) that hackers stole more than \$500 million worth of cryptocurrency, making it one of the largest attacks ever.

Ronghui Gu, co-founder of crypto security firm CertiK, told The Record that the flash loan attack used by the hacker in this incident was specific and surprising in many ways.

“This kind of complicated exploit highlights the constantly shifting frontier of crypto security,” Gu said.

“This is a reminder that hackers are always finding new ways to use old tricks, and for web3 to become a truly secure ecosystem, it requires both the web3 security industry and projects themselves to get better at anticipating, not just responding to, attacks.”

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HEADLINE	<b>07/05 Internet shutdowns costly: \$10B in 2022</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://therecord.media/government-internet-shutdown-costs/">https://therecord.media/government-internet-shutdown-costs/</a>
GIST	<p>Government-ordered internet disruptions not only have human rights impacts — they come with economic costs, too.</p> <p>An updated <a href="#">report</a> from Top10VPN released Tuesday found that there have already been more major internet shutdowns in 2022 so far compared to all of 2021 — and the economic fallout has been nearly twice as severe.</p> <p>Fifty-four internet shutdowns across 16 countries cost \$10.16 billion in 2022 to date, while the company tracked 50 major shutdowns costing \$5.45 billion the previous year, according to the report.</p> <p>The researchers tracked three types of disruptions in their assessment — internet blackouts, social media shutdowns, and severe throttling where mobile networks are only able to transmit voice calls and text messages.</p> <p>The majority of the costs tied to internet disruptions tracked in 2022 so far involve Russia’s ongoing social media blackouts, which the report calculates has cost \$8.77 billion and went into effect around the country’s invasion of neighboring Ukraine.</p>

The cost of the disruptions was calculated via the Netblocks and the Internet Society's Cost of Shutdown Tool. That tool relies on a [methodology](#) developed by the Brookings Institution in 2016 as well as a specialized model from CIPESA for sub-Saharan Africa.

"Regional shutdown costs are derived from the region's economic output as a proportion of national GDP," according to the report. Partial shutdowns costs were calculated in proportion to the latest publicly available internet market-share information for affected countries, per the methodologies section.

That section says researchers review all internet shutdowns each year — sourcing from Netblocks, the Georgia Institute of Technology's Internet Outage Detection & Analysis (IODA) system, and the SFLC.IN Internet Shutdown tracker — and include "deliberate national internet shutdowns along with regional disruptions that are on a sufficient scale to be economically significant."

Most of those incidents tracked by the Top10VPN report this year have human rights implications — such as attempting to interfere with elections, press freedom, or public protests. However, others are connected to the pattern of government internet blackouts in some countries, including Syria and Sudan, during major [academic exams](#).

Top10VPN reports there have been 301 major internet shutdowns in 48 countries since 2019, costing the world economy \$27.68 billion.

However, because the report excludes smaller outages, the full human rights and economic toll of government internet shutdown is likely even greater.

Earlier this year international digital human rights nonprofit Access Now and the #KeepItOn coalition reported they had tracked [182 internet shutdowns across 34 countries](#) in 2021.

But no matter how they are counted, web watchers say such outages can have devastating ripple effects.

"Regardless of the methodology employed to measure such incidents, it is clear that government-directed internet shutdowns profoundly disrupt economies and the lives of the people affected by them," Doug Madory, director of internet analysis at network monitoring firm Kentik told The Record.

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HEADLINE	<b>07/06 NIST picks 4 quantum resistant algorithms</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.zdnet.com/article/to-stop-quantum-hackers-the-us-just-chose-these-four-quantum-resistant-encryption-algorithms/">https://www.zdnet.com/article/to-stop-quantum-hackers-the-us-just-chose-these-four-quantum-resistant-encryption-algorithms/</a>
GIST	<p>The U.S. Department of Commerce's National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) has selected four quantum-resistant cryptographic algorithms for general encryption and digital signatures.</p> <p>NIST, a US standards setting body and research organization within the Department of Commerce, announced the four algorithms after a six-year period assessing potential quantum-resistant (QR) alternatives to today's cryptographic algorithms for public key encryption, digital signatures, and key exchange.</p> <p>In 2016, NIST asked the world's cryptographers to devise and then vet potential quantum-resistant methods to secure communications for everything from websites to email.</p> <p>Today's key algorithms include AES-256 for symmetric key encryption, SHA-256 and SHA-3 for hashing functions, RSA public key encryption for digital signatures and key establishment, Elliptic Curve Cryptography (ECDSA, ECDH) and DSA public key encryption for digital signatures and key exchange.</p> <p>NIST has currently selected only the <a href="#">CRYSTALS-Kyber</a> algorithm for general encryption in a post-quantum world. However, it is still considering four others.</p>

The Kyber algorithm is already used by internet firm Cloudflare in its post-quantum [CIRCL](#) (Cloudflare Interoperable, Reusable Cryptographic Library) library of cryptographic primitives written in Go. Amazon [since 2020](#) has supported Kyber as one of its post-quantum key exchange algorithms for Transport Layer Security (TLS) 1.2, the encryption protocol behind HTTPS websites. And IBM used Kyber for its [first quantum-resistant tape drive](#).

NIST has also nominated [CRYSTALS-Dilithium](#), [FALCON](#) and [SPHINCS+](#) for post-quantum digital signatures.

The four selected encryption algorithms will become part of NIST's post-quantum cryptographic standard, expected to be finalized around 2024. This selection marks the beginning of NIST's [post-quantum cryptography standardization project](#).

[NIST kicked off the search for new post-quantum encryption algorithms in 2016 after assessing](#) that a sufficiently large quantum computer would render all major public key encryption algorithms insecure, while AES-256 would only require larger key sizes, and SHA-256 and SHA-3 would require larger hash outputs.

Its position was based on AT&T Bell Labs researcher [Peter Shor's](#) algorithm that showed a powerful enough quantum computer would endanger many modern communications systems protected by these types of encryption.

And while such a quantum computer is still years away, NIST noted it has historically taken almost 20 years to deploy modern public key cryptography infrastructure. On top of this, a sophisticated adversary could collect a ton data with today's algorithms and decrypt it once they acquire a sufficiently powerful quantum computer.

How big would that encryption-busting computer need to be?

[The Department of Homeland Security \(DHS\) and NIST noted in its 2021 FAQ](#) about post-quantum cryptography that a quantum computer capable of running Shor's Algorithm to break a public key will need an estimated 6,000 stable qubits. But qubits are notoriously fragile.

DHS notes that today's cryptographic algorithms are still very safe from a computer like Google's [54-qubit quantum Sycamore chip](#), which the firm claimed had achieved "quantum supremacy" – although this is disputed. Last year IBM said it was [targeting a 4,000-qubit computer by 2025](#).

"The point at which a given quantum computer is built with sufficient qubit capacity to break public key cryptography sometimes called "cryptographically relevant", when a quantum machine now can break our current cryptographic algorithms. This is still significantly larger in size and power than a quantum machine that achieves "quantum supremacy"," DHS notes.

Still, the the White House in May recognized the impending threat to national security and [outlined several proposals to accelerate US R&D in quantum computing and a rough timeline for federal agencies to deploy quantum-resistant cryptography](#) – to keep it ahead of and safe from rivals like China and Russia. Other governments including those in [Australia](#), [France](#), [the UK](#) and elsewhere have acknowledged post-quantum risks to their organizations' networks and communications.

The White House wants key federal agencies to migrate existing cryptographic systems to ones that are resistant to a 'cryptanalytically'-relevant quantum computer (CRQC) in order to mitigate "as much of the quantum risk as is feasible" by 2035.

NIST recommends CRYSTALS-Dilithium as the primary algorithm for digital signatures, while FALCON is suitable for applications that need signatures smaller than Dilithium can provide.

	<p>NIST picked <a href="#">SPHINCS+</a> as a backup despite it being comparatively larger and slower than the other two because it was based on a different math approach to the other three algorithms it selected.</p> <p>"Three of the selected algorithms are based on a family of math problems called structured lattices, while SPHINCS+ uses hash functions. The additional four algorithms still under consideration are designed for general encryption and do not use structured lattices or hash functions in their approaches," NIST said.</p> <p>"Our post-quantum cryptography program has leveraged the top minds in cryptography – worldwide – to produce this first group of quantum-resistant algorithms that will lead to a standard and significantly increase the security of our digital information." NIST director Laurie E. Locascio <a href="#">said in a statement</a>.</p> <p>NIST <a href="#">intends</a> for the new public-key cryptography standards to specify "one or more additional unclassified, publicly disclosed digital signature, public-key encryption, and key-establishment algorithms that are available worldwide" that can protect sensitive government information beyond the advent of powerful quantum computers.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/05 Ongoing cyberattack campaign against Iran</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://threatpost.com/cyberattack-iran-campaign/180122/">https://threatpost.com/cyberattack-iran-campaign/180122/</a>
GIST	<p>Malware used in a crippling cyberattacks against an Iranian steel plants last week is connected to an attack that shut down the country's rail system last year. In both cases, on malware strain was used to impact physical and critical infrastructure, according <a href="#">to a report from Check Point Research</a>.</p> <p>The overlaps in the code, combined with contextual clues and even recycled jokes, indicate that the same threat actor, dubbed Indra, is behind the attacks impacting Iran's infrastructure.</p> <p><b>Alleged Motives</b></p> <p>On June 27, a steel billet production line at the Khuzestan Steel Corporation began to malfunction. According to reports, sparks flew sparking a fire in the heart of the plant.</p> <p>In a statement to the press, Khuzestan Steel's CEO denied that any damage had been done.</p> <p>"With timely action and vigilance the attack failed and no damage was done to the production line," the company said in a statement.</p> <p>A video posted to Twitter under the username @GonjeshkeDarand claimed responsibility for the both attacks. The video purported to show footage from inside the steel factory. A message was included explaining the attackers' motives:</p> <p>"These companies are subject to international sanctions and continue their operations despite the restrictions. These cyber attacks, being carried out carefully so to protect innocent individuals, are in response to the aggression of the Islamic Republic."</p> <p>Last year – on the morning of Friday, July 9 – Iran's national railway system came under <a href="#">attack</a>. On information boards at stations across the country, hackers posted messages about delays and cancellations that didn't actually exist. (Those messages themselves caused delays, as confusion swept through the commuter crowds.) Check Point attributed that disruption to <a href="#">Indra</a>, a group that's been active since 2019.</p> <p><b>Connecting This Week to Last Year</b></p> <p>In both the steel and railway attacks, the perpetrators posted a notice instructing victims and passengers to call a certain phone number. That number belongs to the office of the Ayatollah Khamenei, according to Check Point.</p> <p>Check Point claims it has overlaps between the malware used in both campaigns.</p>

	<p>An executable (chaplin.exe) discovered in last week's attack is a variant of malware identified as meteor, a wiper strain believed used in last year's attack against Iran's railway system. "It's clear that both variants share a codebase," according to researchers. The malware was dubbed separately as chaplin.</p> <p>Even without a wiper, the malware is potent. "It begins its execution by disconnecting the network adapters, logging off the user, and executing another binary in a new thread," the researchers tweeted. The binary "forces the display to be ON and blocks the user from interacting with the computer." After completely blocking the victim from their own computer's operation, Chaplin displays the hackers' message onscreen and "deletes the 'Lsa' registry key, preventing the system from booting correctly."</p> <p>The investigation into last Monday's attacks is still ongoing.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/05 Experts: China studying Russian cyberwar</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cyberscoop.com/china-taiwan-russia-ukraine-cyberspace/">https://www.cyberscoop.com/china-taiwan-russia-ukraine-cyberspace/</a>
GIST	<p>Military leaders around the world are closely watching Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which just entered its fifth month, but perhaps none more than those in China are tracking the intricacies of Russia's cyberattacks designed to further cripple Kyiv.</p> <p>Cybersecurity experts and <a href="#">China</a> observers who spoke to CyberScoop strongly believe that Beijing's military leaders are learning from Russia's approach to cyberspace — missteps and all — <a href="#">during the Ukraine conflict</a>. There are implications not only for the U.S., but for China's neighbor Taiwan, which a U.S. official said in 2021 could be subject to <a href="#">a Chinese invasion in the next six years</a>.</p> <p>Shawn Henry, a former top FBI official and the head of cybersecurity company CrowdStrike's incident response division, gathered a group of corporate chief information security officers <a href="#">at last month's RSA cybersecurity conference</a> and told them they needed to start planning for how a Chinese invasion of Taiwan, and the potential U.S. response, would affect their companies' ability to keep operating.</p> <p>"China is absolutely watching what's happening in Russia and Ukraine, what the U.S. is doing or not," Henry said. The message he delivered to those CISOs: "Are you thinking about what happens if your supply chain is shut down? What about continuity of operations? What does it look like?"</p> <p><a href="#">Opinions vary widely</a> on the degree to which cyber is playing a role in Russia's Ukraine invasion, and <a href="#">why it hasn't been more prominent</a> — as well as why Russia hasn't acted on threats to the U.S. But there is evidence that Russia has been <a href="#">foiled in some of its ambitions</a>, with Ukrainian officials regularly <a href="#">touting attacks they turned back</a>. At times, Moscow hasn't appeared savvy about its own cybersecurity, such as when Ukrainians reportedly located and killed a general <a href="#">because he was communicating on unencrypted channels</a>.</p> <p><b>What Beijing is seeing</b></p> <p>Some of the possible lessons for a Chinese invasion of Taiwan, then? Strike quickly, pick targets that would cripple the enemy early on and rely on attack methods that never have been observed in public.</p> <p>The idea that China is watching what's happening in the cyberspace element of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine is more than informed speculation. As threat intelligence analyst Zoe Haver detailed for the cybersecurity firm Recorded Future, <a href="#">Beijing has long shown a fascination with Russia's cyberattacks in Ukraine</a>, especially its 2015 attack on the power grid that left hundreds of thousands of citizens without power for hours.</p> <p>"Perhaps you'll see them invest more in offensive cyber operations and keep them hidden, so that unlike in Ukraine, where we were able to — between the United States, our allies, partners and the Ukrainian force — determine where Russia would strike and defend against it successfully," said Tatyana Bolton, a former Department of Homeland Security cyber official who leads the cybersecurity and emerging threats team at</p>



the R Street Institute think tank. “I’m concerned that they’re going to take away from it that they put everything into the first attack.”

Russia did cause communications woes for Ukraine at the outset, Ukrainian and U.S. officials said, by [remotely disabling satellite modems](#). But it didn’t do lasting damage.

“One of the lessons learned for Ukraine was that the Ukrainians showed a fair amount of resilience,” said Emily Harding, a former Senate Intelligence Committee staffer who led the committee’s probe into the 2016 Russian election interference and now researches international security at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. “So how do you look at the recovery in addition to the initial attack and see what’s doable? How do you focus on targets that are harder to recover?”

Starlink, a satellite-based internet service provider, has [emerged as a key plank](#) in the Ukrainians’ ability to stay online, allowing continued communications and the ability to get information out to the world. Dakota Cary, a consultant with the Krebs Stamos Group and a nonresident fellow in the Atlantic Council’s Global China Hub, pointed to [a paper published earlier this year](#) by a Chinese researcher urging the Chinese military to consider tracking Starlink satellites and consider plans to disable them if needed.

The Ukrainians’ success with Starlink — particularly the ability to share information that contradicted the Russian government’s domestic and international messaging — could be a major lesson for Beijing, Cary said.

Tom Hegel, senior threat researcher at cybersecurity firm SentinelOne, said nations other than China are also studying how cyber is playing out in the Ukraine invasion — but that China could have some questions specific to its interests in Taiwan.

“Was there proper coordination and pre-positioning across the Russian government agencies? Was the approach of wipers in the initial waves effective?” he asked in an online conversation with CyberScoop. “What could China do to be more successful in such an invasion? Was there any success to Russia’s influence ops leading up [to]/after the invasion?”

Hegel and others note that China has typically taken a different approach in cyberspace than Russia. China focuses on covert collection of information, while Russia often uses cyber for disruption, as it did by upending the 2016 U.S. election by hacking into key Democratic organizations.

Still, Harding said China appears to be modifying its approach, pointing to the particularly chaotic fallout from last summer’s attack on Microsoft Exchange, [for which the U.S. formally blamed Beijing](#).

“Their cyber campaigns have been a little more willing to push the envelope and care less if they get caught,” Harding said. “The Microsoft Exchange attack was a really interesting example of that, that it went from kind of quiet to very loud. And maybe one lesson they’re learning from Russia is that since attribution is slow and hard, there’s probably a lot they can get away with.”

Both Harding and Bolton said that China has to be worried about how active U.S. Cyber Command — the Pentagon’s offensive cyber wing — has been in [countering Russia during the invasion](#).

On the other hand, Henry said, sanctions that the U.S. has used to punish Russia aren’t as viable with China. The U.S. does relatively little business in Russia. Should the U.S. get as aggressive in slapping sanctions on an economic powerhouse like China over a potential invasion of Taiwan as it did with Russia over its invasion of Ukraine, the blowback for U.S. companies doing business inside China could be considerable, including the possible Chinese nationalization of company assets, Henry said.

It might be a while, though, before the rest of the world determines what China’s primary military force, the People’s Liberation Army, has picked up from Russia’s cyberspace operations in Ukraine.

	<p>Ma Xiu, an analyst at BluePath Labs who researches the PLA and who <a href="#">co-wrote an essay</a> about what the Chinese military is learning from the Ukraine invasion, said a clearer picture of exactly what the Beijing's generals are tracking will emerge soon.</p> <p>“Eventually you will see ‘lessons learned’ type articles appear in PLA media intended primarily for internal consumption, and from those we will be able to get a much clearer picture of what their takeaways were,” he said.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/05 Marriott confirms breach, extortion attempt</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cyberscoop.com/marriott-data-breach-baltimore/">https://www.cyberscoop.com/marriott-data-breach-baltimore/</a>
GIST	<p>Marriott International confirmed Tuesday that unknown criminal hackers broke into its computer networks and then attempted to extort the company, marking the latest in a string of successful cyberattacks against one of the world's biggest hotel chains.</p> <p>The incident, <a href="#">first reported early Tuesday by databreaches.net</a>, allegedly occurred roughly a month ago and was the work of a group claiming to be “an international group working for about five years,” according to the site.</p> <p>A Marriott spokesperson told CyberScoop that the company “is aware of a threat actor who used social engineering to trick one associate at a single Marriott hotel into providing access to the associate’s computer.” The access “only occurred for a short amount of time on one day. Marriott identified and was investigating the incident before the threat actor contacted the company in an extortion attempt, which Marriott did not pay.”</p> <p>The company has notified law enforcement, the spokesperson said.</p> <p>The group claiming responsibility for the attack told Databreaches.net — a news site that focuses on data breaches and cyberattacks — that it stole roughly 20 gigabytes of data, which included credit card information and confidential information about guests and workers from an employee at the BWI Airport Marriott in Baltimore. The attackers “emailed numerous employees” at Marriott about the breach, the site reported, and had been in at least limited communications with Marriott.</p> <p>The Marriott spokesperson said the “incident did involve access to approximately 20 GB of files,” and added that the “size of the files involved is not an indication of the content.”</p> <p>The attackers provided Databreaches.net samples of the documents they claimed to have stolen, and screenshots posted to the site purport to show reservation logs for airline crew members from January 2022 and credit card authorization forms. The site reported that the hackers shared another “relatively recent” file, but Databreaches.net chose not to post it.</p> <p>Marriott told CyberScoop that most of the stolen information was “non-sensitive internal business files regarding the operation of the property.” The company told Databreaches.net that it would be notifying 300-400 people and regulators, as required, a figure the Marriott spokesperson confirmed late Tuesday to CyberScoop.</p> <p>CyberScoop could not independently verify information about the stolen material or about the attackers claiming responsibility.</p> <p>Marriott has suffered serious data breaches in the past, such as in <a href="#">November 2018 when the company revealed</a> hackers breached one of its subsidiary brand’s reservations systems and stole the personal data of roughly 500 million guests. Many American officials and private analysts <a href="#">blamed</a> the Chinese government for that hack, which spanned 2014 to 2018.</p> <p>A second breach, <a href="#">revealed in March 2020</a>, netted hackers with data on as many as 5.2 million guests, the company said at the time.</p>

HEADLINE	07/05 Experts: abortion disinformation growing
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cyberscoop.com/abortion-disinformation/">https://www.cyberscoop.com/abortion-disinformation/</a>
GIST	<p>Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene’s Twitter account struck an urgent tone the Sunday after the Supreme Court’s historic abortion ruling. She implored her 968,000 followers to have the “fortitude to act” against Department of Defense leaders for refusing to recognize the court’s decision, which eliminates the constitutional right to an abortion.</p> <p>But DOD leaders never stated they would ignore the court’s ruling in the Dobbs v. Jackson case.</p> <p>Taylor Greene, a Georgia Republican, <a href="#">repeated a trope</a> that appears to have originated on a now suspended Twitter channel known as BNN Newsroom a day prior. The BNN post erroneously said the Pentagon would not recognize abortion laws implemented in the wake of Dobbs. It was shared more than 26,000 times before being deleted, <a href="#">the Associated Press reported</a>.</p> <p>While Taylor Greene’s call to her followers said DOD leadership had “wage(d) an insurrection against the Supreme Court,” the anodyne statement from Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin III was anything but that.</p> <p><a href="#">Austin’s statement, made in the hours after the court ruled, noted that the agency was “examining” the Dobbs’ decision</a> and evaluating internal policies to ensure access to reproductive health care for service members and their families “as permitted by federal law.”</p> <p>This bland statement spawned the BNN story which, in turn, led to the Taylor Greene tweet exclaiming that DOD leadership “must be removed.”</p> <p>(Taylor Greene’s office did not return an email seeking comment).</p> <p>Disinformation scholars said this incident exemplifies why the abortion issue, both polarizing and emotional, is a perfect vessel for spreading divisive falsehoods. Herb Lin, a senior research scholar for cyber policy and security at Stanford University, said he worries these qualities will make the mounting abortion wars an easy target for foreign interference. He pointed to how <a href="#">Russian influence operators hoping to provoke violence simultaneously promoted pro- and anti-Muslim rallies</a> held at the same time and place during the run up to the 2016 election.</p> <p>Abortion after the Dobbs’ ruling “has all the earmarks of being set up for that” kind of interference, Lin said. “It’s an ideal opportunity for the Russians to intervene ... this is a very emotional issue for everybody, no matter how you feel about it, and being an emotional issue means that you are much less likely to exert your critical thinking.”</p> <p>The Taylor Greene tweet injected hysteria into the pedestrian statement from Austin and harnessed a legitimate sounding fake news source to imply trustworthiness, both key ingredients for spreading <a href="#">disinformation</a>, said Kyleanne Hunter, a senior social scientist at the RAND Corporation.</p> <p>BNN Newsroom is nothing but an automated service that creates headlines by pulling from prominent officials’ tweets, Hunter said. In this case, she noted, the far-right objects to DOD policy, which says that under federal law service members can still get an abortion in cases of rape, incest or where the mother’s health is at risk. But instead of attacking that point head on, a much more exaggerated lie was created and spread to discredit the agency’s leadership, Hunter said.</p> <p>DOD Undersecretary for Personnel and Readiness Gilbert Cisneros, Jr. <a href="#">issued a memo Tuesday that said regardless of state law the DOD will continue to follow federal law</a> for service members. Hunter believes the memo has helped to further fuel the disinformation targeting DOD.</p>

The policy described in the memo “got twisted into now having a sitting member of Congress saying the DOD is undermining a Supreme Court decision,” Hunter said. “It’s a complete misinterpretation of what’s there.”

Hunter, also a senior fellow at the Center for a New American Security, specializes in disinformation involving women in the military and said there is some evidence of foreign intervention through bots helping to spread these claims.

“It’s not because they’re [foreign influence operators] typically wanting to target pregnancy policy or are typically wanting to target women in the military,” Hunter said. “It’s a hot-button, contentious issue in the United States that can agitate and divide us.”

After the 2016 combat exclusion ban lifted, she pointed out, a huge spike in foreign bots on Twitter pushed fake news stories about women getting pregnant while deployed. “It agitates, it divides, and creates contention; it starts to undermine people who are in the military.”

Abortion foes have had similar success spreading disinformation about abortion rights activists in the wake of the the Dobbs’ decision and the leak of it weeks earlier, experts said.

An autonomous collective known as Jane’s Revenge appeared online in May and while the group has no evident organization or leadership, it has [become a boogeyman thanks to the far right and disinformation it has created](#), said Emerson Brooking, a senior fellow at the Atlantic Council’s Digital Forensic Research Lab.

While one group associated with Jane’s Revenge claimed responsibility for an arson, the degree of hysteria surrounding the group is completely out of step with the true threat, Brooking said.

“It’s important to emphasize how quickly it broke into the political elite,” he said, noting that [Republican Sen. Tom Cotton, R-Ark., wrote a letter to Attorney General Merrick Garland demanding the Department of Justice](#) investigate the group as a domestic terrorist organization.

Brooking said there has been no further action from Jane’s Revenge since the arson yet [Facebook declared them a terrorist organization](#) the day after Dobbs was announced — a move which he questioned.

“Facebook hasn’t taken action against collective groups like anonymous or Antifa,” he said. “The immediate Facebook reaction shows how concerned Meta executives are about conservative criticism and it may indicate ... how, unfortunately, responsive they might be to state subpoenas in the future, from anti-choice states and law enforcement agencies.”

A Facebook spokesperson said the platform has invested heavily in fighting misinformation.

“We’re committed to free expression while slowing the spread of misinformation, which is why we work with a global network of independent fact-checking partners who review and rate false content on our apps, including content around abortion and reproductive healthcare,” spokesperson Kevin McAlister said by email. “When a partner rates something as false, we move it lower in Feed so fewer people see it and add a warning label with more information. We also ban ads that have been rated by one of our fact-checkers.”

Over the past two months, the term “Jane’s Revenge” accumulated 82,000 mentions across news and social media platforms with a 798 percent increase in mentions in June compared to a month prior, according to Zignal Labs, a media intelligence software service company.

Dina Montemarano, the research director for the abortion rights advocacy organization NARAL, said Facebook in particular is ground zero for disinformation that perpetuates lies about the safety of abortions and the abortion pill.

	<p>Facebook allows free content and ads that contain virulent disinformation and even when NARAL flags concerns, she said, Facebook does not remove dangerous and untrue content.</p> <p>Disinformation about abortion is very “top down” unlike the lies spread in support of white supremacy and other issues, Montemarano said. Pro-life organization leaders are crafting messages and distributing them to foot soldiers who spread the word and social media platforms, Montemarano said, are all too quick to play host.</p> <p>“What we have found time and time again, is that it takes significant public and political pressure to get them to take any kind of action on this issue and they tend to see abortion as only a political issue,” she said. “Our real ask for these platforms is to treat medical disinformation about abortion care as medical disinformation. ... The platforms have a huge responsibility to make sure that people can get the information they need and that they’re not being targeted by this disinformation machine.”</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/05 Pro-China group targets rare earth mining</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://thehackernews.com/2022/07/pro-china-group-uses-dragonbridge.html">https://thehackernews.com/2022/07/pro-china-group-uses-dragonbridge.html</a>
GIST	<p>A pro-China <a href="#">influence campaign</a> singled out rare earth mining companies in Australia, Canada, and the U.S. with negative messaging in an unsuccessful attempt to manipulate public discourse to China's benefit.</p> <p>Targeted firms included Australia's Lynas Rare Earths Ltd, Canada's Appia Rare Earths &amp; Uranium Corp, and the American company USA Rare Earth, threat intelligence firm Mandiant said in a report last week, calling the digital campaign Dragonbridge.</p> <p>"It targeted an industry of strategic significance to the PRC, including specifically three commercial entities challenging the <a href="#">PRC's global market dominance</a> in that industry," Mandiant <a href="#">noted</a>.</p> <p>The goal, the company noted, was to instigate environmental protests against the companies and propagate counter-narratives in response to potential or planned rare earths production activities involving the targets.</p> <p>This comprised a network of thousands of inauthentic accounts across numerous social media platforms and forums, that worked in tandem to disseminate content that seemingly raised concerns over alleged environmental, health, and labor issues over the operations of the three firms.</p> <p>Some of the bogus accounts masqueraded as Texas citizens in a public 1,200-member <a href="#">Facebook group</a> called "STOP LYNAS! NO to Lynas Exporting and Creating Another Toxic Legacy," alleging the mining firm risks exposing local populations to radioactive contamination and poisoning.</p> <p>A majority of the posts were primarily in English, with limited content written in Chinese and Malay. That said, the activity is said to have received only limited engagement in the form of likes and comments from other accounts.</p> <p>This is not the first time the actor has been linked to disinformation operations conducted in support of the People's Republic of China (PRC). While earlier activities in June 2019 were primarily focused on discrediting pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong, they have since sought to <a href="#">physically mobilize protestors</a> in the U.S. in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>"DRAGONBRIDGE's targeting of additional rare earths mining companies underscores the campaign's ability to monitor developments and respond accordingly," the researchers said.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/06 Hive ransomware upgrades to Rust</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://thehackernews.com/2022/07/hive-ransomware-upgrades-to-rust-for.html">https://thehackernews.com/2022/07/hive-ransomware-upgrades-to-rust-for.html</a>

GIST	<p>The operators of the Hive ransomware-as-a-service (RaaS) scheme have overhauled their file-encrypting software to fully migrate to Rust and adopt a more sophisticated encryption method.</p> <p>"With its latest variant carrying several major upgrades, Hive also proves it's one of the fastest evolving ransomware families, exemplifying the continuously changing ransomware ecosystem," Microsoft Threat Intelligence Center (MSTIC) <a href="#">said</a> in a report on Tuesday.</p> <p><a href="#">Hive</a>, which was first observed in June 2021, has emerged as one of the most prolific RaaS groups, <a href="#">accounting</a> for 17 attacks in the month of May 2022 alone, alongside <a href="#">Black Basta and Conti</a>.</p> <p>The shift from GoLang to Rust makes Hive the second ransomware strain after <a href="#">BlackCat</a> to be written in the programming language, enabling the malware to gain additional benefits such as memory safety and deeper control over low-level resources as well as make use of a wide range of cryptographic libraries.</p> <p>What it also affords is the ability to render the malware resistant to reverse engineering, making it more evasive. Furthermore, it comes with features to stop services and processes associated with security solutions that may stop it in its tracks.</p> <p>Hive is no different from other ransomware families in that it deletes backups to prevent recovery, but what's changed significantly in the new Rust-based variant is its approach to file encryption.</p> <p>"Instead of embedding an encrypted key in each file that it encrypts, it generates two sets of keys in memory, uses them to encrypt files, and then encrypts and writes the sets to the root of the drive it encrypts, both with .key extension," MSTIC explained.</p> <p>To determine which of the two keys is used for locking a specific file, an encrypted file is renamed to include the file name containing the key that's then followed by an underscore and a Base64-encoded string (e.g., "C:\myphoto.jpg.l0Zn68cb _ -B82BhIaGhI8") that points to two different locations in the corresponding .key file.</p> <p>The findings come as the threat actor behind the lesser-known <a href="#">AstraLocker</a> ransomware ceased operations and released a decryption tool as part of a shift to cryptojacking, Bleeping Computer <a href="#">reported</a> this week.</p> <p>But in an indication that the cybercriminal landscape is in constant flux, cybersecurity researchers have <a href="#">discovered</a> a new <a href="#">ransomware family</a> called RedAlert (aka N13V) that's capable of targeting both Windows and Linux VMWare ESXi servers.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/06 Bitter APT targets Bangladesh military</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://thehackernews.com/2022/07/bitter-apt-hackers-continue-to-target.html">https://thehackernews.com/2022/07/bitter-apt-hackers-continue-to-target.html</a>
GIST	<p>Military entities located in Bangladesh continue to be at the receiving end of sustained cyberattacks by an advanced persistent threat tracked as Bitter.</p> <p>"Through malicious document files and intermediate malware stages the threat actors conduct espionage by deploying Remote Access Trojans," cybersecurity firm SECUINFRA <a href="#">said</a> in a new write-up published on July 5.</p> <p>The findings from the Berlin-headquartered company build on a <a href="#">previous report</a> from Cisco Talos in May, which disclosed the group's expansion in targeting to strike Bangladeshi government organizations with a backdoor called <a href="#">ZxxZ</a>.</p> <p>Bitter, also tracked under the codenames APT-C-08 and T-APT-17, is said to be active <a href="#">since at least late 2013</a> and has a track record of targeting China, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia using different tools such as BitterRAT and ArtraDownloader.</p>



<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	<p>The latest attack chain detailed by SECUINFRA is believed to have been conducted in mid-May 2022, originating with a weaponized Excel document likely distributed by means of a spear-phishing email that, when opened, exploits the Microsoft Equation Editor exploit (<a href="#">CVE-2018-0798</a>) to drop the next-stage binary from a remote server.</p> <p>ZxxZ (or MuuyDownloader by the Qi-Anxin Threat Intelligence Center), as the downloaded payload is called, is implemented in Visual C++ and functions as a second-stage implant that allows the adversary to deploy additional malware.</p> <p>The most notable change in the malware is that it has dropped using "ZxxZ" as the separator used when sending information back to the command-and-control (C2) server in favor of an underscore, suggesting that the group is actively making modifications to its source code to stay under the radar.</p> <p>Also put to use by the threat actor in its campaigns is a backdoor dubbed Almond RAT, a .NET-based RAT that <a href="#">first came to light</a> in May 2022 and offers basic data gathering functionality and the ability to execute arbitrary commands. Additionally, the implant employs obfuscation and string encryption techniques to evade detection and to hinder analysis.</p> <p>"Almond RATs main purposes seem to be file system discovery, data exfiltration and a way to load more tools/establish persistence," the researchers said. "The design of the tools seems to be laid out in a way that it can be quickly modified and adapted to the current attack scenario."</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/06 NCSC: extended period elevated cyber risk</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/ncsc-prepare-cyber-risk/">https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/ncsc-prepare-cyber-risk/</a>
GIST	<p>The UK's leading cybersecurity agency has urged organizations to follow best practices and take care of their infosecurity staff in order to weather an extended period of elevated cyber risk due to the ongoing war in Ukraine.</p> <p>The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) <a href="#">guide</a>, <i>Maintaining a sustainable strengthened cyber security posture</i>, comes on the back of warnings that organizations must "prepare for the long haul" as the conflict enters its fifth month.</p> <p>Alongside basic hygiene controls, the strengthening of cyber-resilience and revisiting of risk-based decisions made in the earlier acute phase of the war, organizations should pay special attention to their security staff, the NCSC said.</p> <p>"Increased workloads for cybersecurity staff over an extended period can harm their wellbeing and lead to lower productivity, with a potential rise in unsafe behaviors or errors," it said.</p> <p>With this in mind, the guide highlighted several steps IT security managers should consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Empower staff to make decisions in order to improve agility and free-up leaders to focus on medium-term priorities</li> <li>• Spread workloads evenly across a wider pool of staff to reduce the risk of burnout and enable less experienced employees to benefit from development opportunities</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for staff to recharge through more frequent breaks and time away from the office, as well as work on less pressured tasks</li> <li>• Look after each other by watching for signs colleagues are struggling and ensuring they always have the right resources to hand</li> <li>• Engage the entire workforce with the right internal communications processes, and support so that all staff are able to identify and report suspicious behavior</li> </ul> <p>"From the start of the conflict in Ukraine, we have been asking organizations to strengthen their cyber-defenses to help keep the UK secure, and many have done so," said NCSC director for national resilience and strategy, Paul Maddinson.</p>

	“But it’s now clear that we’re in this for the long haul and it’s vital that organizations support their staff through this demanding period of heightened cyber-threat.”
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HEADLINE	<b>07/05 New RedAlert ransomware operation</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/new-redalert-ransomware-targets-windows-linux-vmware-esxi-servers/">https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/new-redalert-ransomware-targets-windows-linux-vmware-esxi-servers/</a>
GIST	<p>A new ransomware operation called RedAlert, or N13V, encrypts both Windows and Linux VMWare ESXi servers in attacks on corporate networks.</p> <p>The new operation was discovered today by MalwareHunterTeam, <a href="#">who tweeted</a> various images of the gang's data leak site.</p> <p>The ransomware has been called 'RedAlert' based on a string used in the ransom note. However, from a Linux encryptor obtained by BleepingComputer, the threat actors call their operation 'N13V' internally...</p> <p>The Linux encryptor is created to target VMware ESXi servers, with command-line options that allow the threat actors to shut down any running virtual machines before encrypting files.</p> <p>When encrypting files, the ransomware utilizes the <a href="#">NTRUEncrypt</a> public-key encryption algorithm, which support various 'Parameter Sets' that offer different levels of security.</p> <p>An interesting feature of RedAlert/N13V is the '-x' command-line option that performs 'asymmetric cryptography performance testing' using these different NTRUEncrypt parameter sets. However, it is unclear if there is a way to force a particular parameter set when encrypting and/or if the ransomware will select a more efficient one.</p> <p>The only other ransomware operation known to use this encryption algorithm is <a href="#">FiveHands</a>.</p> <p>The Tor payment site is similar to other ransomware operation sites as it displays the ransom demand and provides a way to negotiate with the threat actors.</p> <p>However, RedAlert/N13V only accepts the Monero cryptocurrency for payment, which is not commonly sold in USA crypto exchanges because it is a privacy coin.</p> <p>While only a Linux encryptor has been found, the payment site has hidden elements showing that Windows decryptors also exist.</p> <p><b>"Board of Shame"</b></p> <p>Like almost all new enterprise-targeting ransomware operations, RedAlert conducts double-extortion attacks, which is when data is stolen, and then ransomware is deployed to encrypt devices.</p> <p>This tactic provides two extortion methods, allowing the threat actors to not only demand ransom to receive a decryptor but also demand one to prevent the leaking of stolen data.</p> <p>When a victim does not pay a ransom demand, the RedAlert gang publishes stolen data on their data leak site that anyone can download.</p> <p>Currently, the RedAlert data leak site only contains the data for one organization, indicating that the operation is very new.</p> <p>While there has not been a lot of activity with the new N13V/RedAlert ransomware operation, it is one that we will definitely need to keep an eye on due to its advanced functionality and immediate support for both Linux and Windows.</p>

HEADLINE	<b>07/05 Malicious NPM modules supply-chain attack</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/npm-supply-chain-attack-impacts-hundreds-of-websites-and-apps/">https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/npm-supply-chain-attack-impacts-hundreds-of-websites-and-apps/</a>
GIST	<p>An NPM supply-chain attack dating back to December 2021 used dozens of malicious NPM modules containing obfuscated Javascript code to compromise hundreds of downstream desktop apps and websites.</p> <p>As researchers at supply chain security firm ReversingLabs discovered, the threat actors behind this campaign (known as IconBurst) used <a href="#">typosquatting</a> to infect developers looking for very popular packages, such as umbrellajs and ionic.io NPM modules.</p> <p>If fooled by the very similar module naming scheme, they would add the malicious packages designed to steal data from embedded forms (including those used for sign-in) to their apps or websites.</p> <p>For instance, one of the malicious NPM packages used in this campaign (icon-package) has over 17,000 downloads and is designed to exfiltrate serialized form data to several attacker-controlled domains.</p> <p>IconBurst "relied on typo-squatting, a technique in which attackers offer up packages via public repositories with names that are similar to — or common misspellings of — legitimate packages," <a href="#">said</a> Karlo Zanki, a reverse engineer at ReversingLabs.</p> <p>"Furthermore, similarities between the domains used to exfiltrate data suggest that the various modules in this campaign are in the control of a single actor."</p> <p><b>Some malicious modules still available for download</b></p> <p>While the ReversingLabs team reached out to the NPM security team on July 1, 2022, to report its findings, some IconBurst malicious packages are still available on the NPM registry.</p> <p>"While a few of the named packages have been removed from NPM, most are still available for download at the time of this report," Zanki added.</p> <p>"As very few development organizations have the ability to detect malicious code within open source libraries and modules, the attacks persisted for months before coming to our attention."</p> <p>Even though the researchers could compile <a href="#">a list of malicious packages</a> used in the IconBurst supply-chain attack, its impact is yet to be determined, seeing that there's no way to know how much data and credentials were stolen via infected apps and web pages since December 2021.</p> <p>The only metrics available at the time are the number of times each malicious NPM module has been installed, and ReversingLabs' stats are quite startling.</p> <p>"While the full extent of this attack isn't yet known, the malicious packages we discovered are likely used by hundreds, if not thousands of downstream mobile and desktop applications as well as websites," Zanki said.</p> <p>"Malicious code bundled within the NPM modules is running within an unknown number of mobile and desktop applications and web pages, harvesting untold amounts of user data."</p> <p>"The NPM modules our team identified have been collectively downloaded more than 27,000 times."</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/05 Evolving toll fraud Android malware attack</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.hackread.com/microsoft-warn-toll-fraud-android-malware-attack/">https://www.hackread.com/microsoft-warn-toll-fraud-android-malware-attack/</a>

GIST	<p>Microsoft's 365 Defender team has detected a new and evolving <a href="#">Android malware</a> that targets users' crypto wallets to steal funds without raising suspicion. According to researchers; the malware hunts for devices still using older versions of Android OS.</p> <p>Toll fraud falls into a billing fraud subcategory that automatically signs the user for a premium service without asking for user content. Since it is continuously evolving, researchers regard it as dangerous Android malware.</p> <p><b>A Novel Fraud</b></p> <p>The malware has a unique attack approach compared to other billing frauds such as call or SMS fraud. Where other types of scams utilize standard attack flow involving making calls or sending messages to premium numbers, toll fraud uses a complicated multi-step attack flow, which the malware developers are continually improving.</p> <p>Furthermore, Microsoft explained that the malware targets "specific network operators" and performs its routines only if the device is subscribed to one of its approved network operators. And it uses cellular data for its malicious operations by default. In fact, it forces devices to connect to a mobile network even when a <a href="#">Wi-Fi connection</a> is available.</p> <p><b>Attack Scenario</b></p> <p>According to the findings shared by Microsoft's researchers, the evolving toll fraud scheme exploits the Wireless Application Protocol (<a href="#">WAP</a>) billing mechanism to target Android users. For your information, applications use WAP to charge users for paid content via their mobile phone bills. But, the malware can easily enroll the user in premium services since it utilizes cellular networks to function.</p> <p>The attack chain commences when the user disconnects from a Wi-Fi network and connects to a mobile network. The Android malware quickly launched the subscription page and automatically subscribed the user to the service.</p> <p>Once this is done, the malware reads a <a href="#">one-time password (OTP)</a>, if any, and fills the required fields to finish the subscription process. The attackers then disguise this activity by disabling SMS notifications.</p> <p><b>Possible Dangers</b></p> <p>According to Microsoft's <a href="#">blog post</a>, Toll fraud poses numerous risks, including the unwanted increase in your monthly phone bill. Since the malware hides behind legitimate apps requiring a wide range of permissions, it becomes impossible to detect it. It hides behind apps requesting SMS permissions, personalization, editing access, and communication-related privileges. Such as wallpaper or lock screen apps, chat/messaging apps, fake antivirus, and cleaner and camera apps.</p> <p>It must be noted that the malware targets phones running Android 9 or older versions. This means mobile phones using Android version 10 or higher are safe. Still, it is recommended to install antivirus apps for added protection and avoid installing apps from <a href="#">3rd-party sources</a>.</p>
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HEADLINE	07/05 Phishing scams target Middle East
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/phishing-scams-target-middle-east/?&amp;web_view=true">https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/phishing-scams-target-middle-east/?&amp;web_view=true</a>
GIST	<p>CloudSEK researchers have identified an extensive phishing campaign in which threat actors (TA) were impersonating the Ministry of Human Resources of the UAE government.</p> <p>Spotted through the company's artificial intelligence (AI) digital risk monitoring platform XVigil, the new threat would target various government and corporate entities across the finance, travel, hospital, legal, oil and gas and consultation industries.</p> <p>"The actors created a fake website [...] that resembles the legitimate domain [...] to defraud users," CloudSEK wrote in an advisory.</p>

The security experts' investigation suggests this is a large-scale phishing campaign, mainly targeted at individual job seekers and businesses and exposing them to 419 and BEC scams.

"Upon observing the pattern of the email address used to register the domains, domain name, and hosting infrastructure, it can be inferred that a single threat actor or a threat actor group owns all these phishing domains and websites," CloudSEK said.

Further investigation of the email address also led to the discovery of 43 domains that shared the same registrant information.

"During the course of our investigation into the fake domain, CloudSEK researchers discovered various other domains on the Open Source Internet (OSINT) that were reported on websites [...] as scams, targeting job seekers."

According to the security experts, the above phishing projects could also be utilized by other threat actors to target specific users and steal their passwords, documents, crypto wallets and other sensitive information.

To mitigate the impact of these attacks, CloudSEK said companies and individuals should avoid downloading suspicious documents from unknown sources or clicking on suspicious links.

Further, the company said the visibility of file extensions should be enabled (on Windows systems) to spot files with unknown file extensions before downloading them.

Finally, CloudSEK concluded that both multi-factor authentication (MFA) and the use of up-to-date antivirus and anomaly detection tools could also help reduce the impact of these advanced phishing scams.

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HEADLINE	<b>07/05 Bellevue police new accountability website</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://mynorthwest.com/3549247/bellevue-police-has-new-transparency-and-accountability-website/">https://mynorthwest.com/3549247/bellevue-police-has-new-transparency-and-accountability-website/</a>
GIST	<p>Bellevue Police say the new <a href="#">Transparency and Accountability Website</a> is designed to help strengthen trust between the police department and the community.</p> <p>On the website are real-time crime statistics, crime trends, community engagement efforts, use of force reports, and information about diversity within the department.</p> <p>According to Bellevue Police, the dashboard will help residents be more aware of public safety issues and work with police on solutions to make the community safer.</p> <p>"We are happy to share this police data with our community members so they can become more aware of public safety issues and partner with us to develop solutions to make our community safer," said Chief Wendell Shirley. "The public can log onto this new website and see real-time statistics and crime trends and be able to analyze the data that impacts them."</p> <p>The site also explains use of force, breaking down each reportable incident by the level of force, the reason for contact, and the demographics of the subject and involved officer. It also features information about diversity within the department and includes opportunities to engage with the department.</p> <p>"We continuously strive to earn the public's trust and this website is another way to make a connection with our community," Chief Shirley stated.</p> <p>Crime data is refreshed every 48 hours. It can be filtered by demographics, crimes, arrests, location, and data.</p>

HEADLINE	<b>07/05 El Salvador big bet on bitcoin backfires?</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/05/world/americas/el-salvador-bitcoin-national-currency.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/05/world/americas/el-salvador-bitcoin-national-currency.html</a>
GIST	<p>Bitcoin was meant to transform El Salvador's economy, catapulting the poor Central American nation into an unlikely harbinger of a financial revolution.</p> <p>But nearly a year after the country's president, Nayib Bukele, shocked the financial world by making its most popular digital coin a national currency, his bet appears to be backfiring, highlighting the gap between the utopian promises of cryptocurrency's proponents and economic realities.</p> <p>The government's bitcoin holdings have lost about 60 percent of their presumed value during the recent market plunge. The use of bitcoin among Salvadorans has collapsed and the country is running out of cash after Mr. Bukele failed to raise fresh funds from cryptocurrency investors.</p> <p>Still, the financial setbacks have <a href="#">failed to dent Mr. Bukele's popularity</a>. <a href="#">Polls show</a> that more than eight of 10 Salvadorans continue backing the president, thanks in part to his widely supported crackdown on criminal gangs and on fuel subsidies that have lessened the sting of global inflation.</p> <p>But the failure of Mr. Bukele's stated objectives for bitcoin — to bring investment to the country and financial services to the poor — has exposed the shortcomings of his authoritarian, image-focused style of governance, critics say. It has also raised questions about the financial sustainability of his ambitious plan to modernize El Salvador at the expense of democratic governance.</p> <p>Last year, his government allocated the equivalent of 15 percent of its annual investment budget to try ingrain bitcoin into the national economy.</p> <p>It offered \$30 dollars, nearly 1 percent of what an average Salvadoran earns in a year, to every citizen who downloaded a government-backed cryptocurrency payment app called Chivo Wallet; chivo means "cool" in local slang.</p> <p>Mr. Bukele claims that nearly 3 million Salvadorans, or 60 percent of adults, heeded his call.</p> <p>Yet, after the initial uptake, the use of cryptocurrency has plunged.</p> <p>Only 10 percent of Chivo users continued making bitcoin transactions on the app after spending their \$30 stipend, according to a survey conducted by three American-based economists in February and published by the National Bureau of Economic Research. Almost no new customers downloaded the app this year, the researchers found.</p> <p>"The government gave this project as much push as you could hope for, and it still failed," said Fernando Alvarez, a University of Chicago economist and an author of the study.</p> <p>A separate survey by El Salvador's Chamber of Commerce in March found that only 14 percent of the country's businesses made bitcoin transactions since it was introduced in September, and only 3 percent said they perceived any business value in it.</p> <p>Salvadorans in the United States have also ignored Mr. Bukele's call to use bitcoin to send money to relatives back home. Digital currency payment apps, such as Chivo, accounted for less than 2 percent of remittances in the first five months of this year, according to El Salvador's central bank.</p> <p>Mr. Bukele's bitcoin push was dealt a further blow by a global cryptocurrency sell off that wiped away hundreds of billions dollars from the value of digital assets since March.</p>



“People are scared of losing their money,” said Edgardo Villalobos, who coordinates vendors at a sprawling street market in downtown San Salvador, El Salvador’s capital. After the recent price collapse, he said his \$30 stipend from downloading the Chivo app is worth \$10.

Still, despite the downturn, bitcoin enthusiasts and entrepreneurs argue that the introduction of bitcoin has transformed El Salvador’s image into that of a technological trailblazer and has created financial opportunities for its citizens outside the mainstream banking systems.

“To the extent that we are pursuing financial freedom, we are still on track for that,” said Eric Gravengaard, the C.E.O. of Athena Bitcoin, a United States-based cryptocurrency company that operates El Salvador’s network of cryptocurrency A.T.M.s and processes bitcoin transactions for the country’s largest retail chains.

Critics say bitcoin has also failed to bring the promised wave of cryptocurrency entrepreneurs into the country.

Only 48 new companies focused on bitcoin have registered in El Salvador since the cryptocurrency’s introduction, according to the country’s central bank; that represents less than 2 percent of all businesses that opened in 2019. Almost all are start-ups that hire few locals and bring little investment, said Leonor Selva, the executive director of El Salvador’s National Association for Private Enterprise.

“In day-to-day, the impact has been null,” she said, adding that instead of attracting new investors, bitcoin has scared off traditional financiers concerned by cryptocurrency’s impact on economic stability.

Mr. Gravengaard retorted by pointing out that all but two of his company’s 30 employees in El Salvador are local citizens. More broadly, the country’s growing tech sector has given its youth an opportunity to build a career in a country that has long been one of the largest sources of migrants to the United States.

“This is simply a dream,” said Gerson Martínez, a Salvadoran bitcoin entrepreneur. “As a son of migrants who had to leave El Salvador, this gives me a lot of hope.”

The price collapse has also not deterred Mr. Bukele’s enthusiasm for bitcoin, which has earned him the adulation of the global cryptocurrency community.

In a series of Twitter posts over the past year, Mr. Bukele announced that he had bought a total of nearly 2,400 bitcoin tokens since September, in deals valued at an estimated \$100 million. When critics accused him of financial irresponsibility, he responded by saying that he conducts transactions on his phone while naked.

“Bitcoin is the future!,” he said in a Twitter post on June 30 after announcing his latest purchase amid an ongoing cryptocurrency sell-off. “Thank you for selling cheap.”

It is unclear where the bitcoin assets are held, what they are worth, how they were paid for or even who holds the codes that prove their ownership.

Mr. Bukele’s press office, his finance minister, José Alejandro Zelaya, and his bitcoin adviser, Samson Mow, did not respond to requests for comment.

So far, Mr. Bukele’s trades have cost the country an estimated \$63 million in lost value, according to estimates last week by the magazine Disruptive, published by Francisco Gavidia University in San Salvador.

The losses are increasing as the government struggles to subsidize the rising costs of food and fuel imports and meet an upcoming debt payment.

Underlining the funding challenges, Mr. Bukele last year slashed disbursements for local governments, forcing some mayors to reduce public services like scholarships and water infrastructure.

“The problem with bitcoin is that no one is gaining anything,” said Carlos Acevedo, a Salvadoran economist and former central bank director. “It’s an investment that doesn’t bring social benefits.”

The collapse of cryptocurrency prices has already derailed a main plank of Mr. Bukele’s financial experiment: the issue of the world’s first government bond backed by bitcoin.

The bond would have allowed Mr. Bukele to bypass traditional financial institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund, which has made fresh funds to the country conditional on financial discipline.

After announcing a \$1 billion bond denominated in bitcoin, the government postponed the project indefinitely at the last minute, in March, claiming the war in Ukraine had worsened global financial conditions.

Economists say this has left the country with few good options to make an \$800 million payment on its debt that is due in January, or subsequent payments in later years.

Eventually, Mr. Bukele will face a difficult choice of drastically cutting public spending at the risk of angering voters, or pushing the country into default. A default could disrupt basic imports, reduce growth and even cause a bank run.

“Bukele has shown that he cares more about public image than sound economic management,” said Frank Muci, a public policy expert at the London School of Economics who has studied El Salvador’s bitcoin bond. “But eventually the chickens will come home to roost, at a very high cost for the country.”

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## Terror Conditions

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HEADLINE	07/04 Atomwaffen members trained in Russia?
SOURCE	<a href="https://malcontentment.com/washingtons-defunct-atomwaffen-division-had-deep-ties-to-the-terrorist-org-russia-imperialist-movement/">https://malcontentment.com/washingtons-defunct-atomwaffen-division-had-deep-ties-to-the-terrorist-org-russia-imperialist-movement/</a>
GIST	<p>[KIRKLAND, Wash.] – MTN On February 26, 2020, in the Totem Lake Fred Meyer parking lot in Kirkland, FBI agents moved in and arrested neo-Nazi group Atomwaffen Division leader Cameron Brandon Shea of Redmond, Washington, on a warrant for four felonies. Shea, who worked in the Seattle suburb grocery store, was arrested with four coconspirators on various charges. On the surface, Atomwaffen appears to be an internally created extremist group that identifies with the policies of Nazi Germany. In reality, the group has ties to the Russian Imperial Movement (RIM), and former Washington state residents Kaleb James Cole and Aiden Bruce Umbaugh likely received military training in St. Petersburg, Russia.</p> <p>The trail that led three Washingtonians to connect with Russian neo-Nazi terrorist leaders follows a twisted path that begins in the mind of a 14-year-old American in 1966. The road winds through a global white nationalist movement with roots in St. Petersburg, Russia, leading to the creation of Iron March by a Russian national who used the pseudonym of Alexander Slavros, and amplified by Brandon Clint Russell.</p> <p>In late 2015, the Atomwaffen division in the United States was born, and a few months later, Cole created the Washington Division of Atomwaffen in the suburbs of Seattle. Among those who created a deeper connection to the terrorist organization RIM? The founder of the white power Traditionalist Worker Party and Iron Dome, Matthew Heimbach.</p>

Russell, a dual citizen of The Bahamas and the United States, was openly radicalized in his teens. He engaged in the online forum Iron March, where he quickly grew credibility among the neo-Nazi movement. Despite his beliefs being public and his direct ties to five radicalized far-right organizations, Russell was able to enlist in the Florida National Guard. A 2017 double homicide investigation in Tampa, Florida, revealed Russell's connections and the discovery of bomb-making materials, radioactive isotopes, and neo-Nazi propaganda.

Russell was never charged with the murder of his roommates, both members of Atomwaffen. He was arrested on federal charges and, in September 2017, pled guilty to possessing an unregistered destructive device and illegally storing explosives. Within Russell's orbit was John Cameron Denton, one of the earliest members of Atomwaffen. Between 2016 and 2017 and likely before his arrest, Russell passed leadership to the neo-Nazi group to him.

Heimbach was influenced by the ramblings of cult leader Charles Manson and his admirer James Mason. Mason is considered the Godfather of fascist terrorism in North America. Among white nationalists, the 1992 book *The Seige* is a manifesto for creating a global race war to establish white nationalist rule. Mason's writings call for the creation of autonomous neo-Nazi terror cells and the destruction of the United States government.

Mason's radicalization started when he was 14 and joined the American Nazi Party (ANP) in the 1960s. After the founder of the ANP was assassinated in 1967, Mason wandered for several years before joining the National Socialist Liberation Front. In 1982 Mason started writing letters to Manson disciples Sandra Good and Lynette "Squeaky" Fromme. The pair were imprisoned for participating in the grizzly Manson Family murder spree in 1969, leaving seven dead. Good and Fromme introduced Mason to Manson through correspondence, and Manson, from his prison cell, formed the Universal Order movement with Mason in 1982.

Mason had started writing a series of essays in 1980 for a self-published monthly newsletter called *The Seige*. From 1980 to 1986, Mason praised Manson and professed that the cult leader would be the ideal person to mold a new Nazi leadership in a post-race-fueled civil war America. Michael Moynihan (not to be confused with the American journalist) was a reader of *The Seige*, and in 1992 he edited and published the writings as a book called *The Seige: The Collective Writings of James Mason*. In 2003, the Black Sun Press republished the book under a new name, *The Seige*, and added a foreword written by Mason.

Around the same time *The Seige* was being prepared for publication Stanislav Vorobyev formed RIM in St. Petersburg, Russia. The ultranationalist organization embraces neo-Nazi ideology, wants to restore Russia to its pre-1917 borders, eliminate those not of ethno-Russian blood and re-establish rule by the Russian Orthodox Church and white nationalists with bloodlines to the tsarist Romanovs.

RIM didn't draw much attention in post-Soviet collapsed Russia until 2007 when Vorobyev formed the Rezerv Paramilitary Club (RPC). In Russia, paramilitary clubs are legal and controlled by the Voluntary Society for Cooperation with the Army, Aviation, and Navy (DOSAAF). DOSAAF was created in the 1950s by the Soviet Union to promote a healthy lifestyle and teach the history of Russian military glory. The RPC formed a paramilitary training camp at an abandoned Soviet-era military base in St. Petersburg with the blessing of the Kremlin.

In 2012 with support from then Russian Federation President Dmitry Medvedev, RIM formed the New Force political party. The platform softened its extremist message to become more palatable to the Russian public. It claimed to support "democratic values" but called for restricting immigration to ethnic Russians and holding undocumented immigrants in slave labor camps. In 2013 working with other Russian-based neo-Nazi groups, RIM went public, organizing an anti-immigration protest in Voronezh, Russia.

In late 2013 as Ukraine made its intentions of pulling away from the Kremlin known, Vorobyev wrote, "The stability of anti-Russian regimes on all the territory inhabited by the Russian ethnos" is the greatest threat to the "Russian national survival." Working with pro-Russian figures in Ukraine, members of RIM

were involved in destabilizing the Kyiv government and fomenting Euromaidan counterprotests that led to dozens of deaths.

On February 28, 2014, the day after the Russian military occupied the Crimea Peninsula, members of RIM flew with the Russian military to Sevastopol. Among the passengers were Vorobyev and Nikolay Trushchalov, the head of external affairs for RIM. In March, four members of RIM met with neo-Nazi pro-Russian separatist leaders in the Ukrainian city of Donetsk.

After the meeting in Donetsk, RIM coordinated with other ultranationalist and pro-Nazi organizations in Russia, including Rodina. It held a demonstration in Moscow to support ethnic Russians living in Ukraine. In a cynical twist, Russian organizations aligned with Nazi ideology led protests accusing the legitimate government in Kyiv of Nazi atrocities.

Around the same time, the RPC received its new name, the Russian Imperial Legion, and started training mercenaries to fight against Ukraine. RIM actively recruited military veterans and provided two weeks of combat training, sending squad-sized groups into separatist-controlled Ukraine through humanitarian corridors. RIM mercenaries reported directly into the Russian 1st and 2nd Army Corps of the Donetsk (DNR) and Luhansk People's Republics (LNR). Vorobyev and Trushchalov worked with Russian military veteran and Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) agent Igor Girkin (who goes by the alias Igor Strelkov). Girkin is accused of being directly responsible for the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17, which killed 298 when a Boeing 777-200ER was shot down on the Ukraine-Russia border. Girkin was the first commander of the 1st Army Corps of the DNR and had up to 300 RIM-provided mercenaries of the Imperial Legion under his command.

The troops led by Girkin were accused of committing dozens of atrocities against Ukrainians and Ukrainian soldiers. Even today, Girkin on Telegram rails against prisoner of war exchanges done by the Russian Federation in Ukraine and reminds his followers that if he was still in charge of the DNR 1st Army Corps, he would take no prisoners.

In the fall of 2014, Girkin was forced to flee to Russia after a series of military failures in the Donbas, refusal to comply with the directives of the Kremlin and the negative publicity from the downing of Flight 17. The FSB started a purge of Girkin-aligned leaders in the 1st Army Corps due to their ideology being out of alignment with Moscow's goals. But among white nationalists and neo-Nazis, the credibility of RIM and the Imperial Legion grew, gaining international attention on Telegram, the dark web, and the Russian Facebook clone VKontakte.

Although overt racism and white nationalism were pushed just under the surface in American society starting in the late 1970s, the ideology and its purveyors didn't fade away. The Internet, economic dissatisfaction caused by the Great Recession of 2008, and the election of Barack Obama and his "liberal agenda" caused the movement to rise back to the surface. Hate groups found the Internet was the perfect place to share their message, radicalize people in their youth, and recruit members to their ranks. The organizations weaponized the First Amendment to support their cause while amplifying their messages through the use of marketing agencies, troll farms, and automated bots. Social media companies and web host providers were slow to respond.

Among those to embrace this newfound acceptance was Heimbach, the co-founder of the Traditionalist Worker Party. In 2011, he joined the Youth for Western Civilization (YFWC) club at Towson University in Maryland. Like Mason and Russell, Heimbach's radicalization started in his teens, and like RIM founder Vorobyev in Russia, he earned a degree in history. In 2012 Heimbach wrote in the YFWC blog, "No longer will the homosexual, Muslim, and black supremacist groups be allowed to hijack our campus. [We are] preparing to take our campus back, all we need is the help of people like you to make it happen."

For the administration of Towson University, the blog posts and campus vandalism with the messages of "white pride" and "white guilt is over" scrawled on sidewalks and buildings was a bridge too far. In the spring of 2012, the university dissolved the YFWC chapter. Undeterred, Heimbach created the White Student Union and invited Jared Taylor, the creator of the ultranationalist faux think tank American

Renaissance, to speak at the university. Taylor was so impressed by Heimbach's radical views on race that he took him under his wing.

In 2013 Taylor invited Heimbach to speak at the American Renaissance conference in Nashville, Tennessee. Another featured speaker was neo-Nazi Richard Spencer, a speaker, and organizer of the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, in 2017. Taylor's session was called "Report from the Trenches." At the conference, Heimbach asked Paul Ramsey, "Where do we create our ethnostate?"

Ramsey replied, "We need to Balkanize and create our own homeland. We have a right to exist."

With white nationalist movements moving to the open in the United States and Russia and politicians in both countries embracing the ideology, the twin paths a world apart were on a collision course.

In 2015 the International Conservative Forum of Russia was held in St. Petersburg with support from the Russian government. The conference was organized by Rodina and RIM, attracting leaders and influencers of white nationalist organizations from Germany, Italy, Greece, Norway, Sweden, Finland, and the United States. Among the attendees from the United States was Taylor of American Renaissance. Also in attendance was Russell, who had already laid the foundation to create Atomwaffen.

Russell began spreading his ultranationalist message online in 2011 when he was 16 years old, creating the neo-Nazi organization Iron March in 2013. In 2015 while in St. Petersburg, he met with Taylor of American Renaissance and the leaders of the Nordic Resistance Movement of Sweden, the National Action group of Germany, CasPound of Italy, and Golden Dawn of Greece. In October of 2015, Russell announced the creation of Atomwaffen in Florida.

Shortly after the same conference and Taylor's return to the United States, his pupil Heimbach formed Iron Dome. The new organization was created in parallel with the Traditionalist Worker Party, but aligned with the call of direct action and terror cell-based ultranationalism. Iron Dome would eventually merge with Atomwaffen.

Members of the Nordic Resistance Movement who attended the Russian forum in 2015 returned to St. Petersburg in 2016 and received combat training from RIM. From November 2016 to January 2017, Nordic Resistance Movement members Anton Thulin, Viktor Melin, and a third coconspirator executed three terrorist attacks in Gothenburg, Sweden. The trio targeted a coffee shop and two asylum homes for refugees. In the third incident, the bomb failed to detonate. The three were tried and found guilty of the attacks and sentenced to 8-1/2 years in prison.

At the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, Heimbach met members of the Atomwaffen Division and moved the Traditionalist Workers Party further right, fully embracing anti-Semitism and white nationalism. According to ProPublica and the Southern Poverty Law Center, Heimbach wrote on Discord after Charlottesville, "The Jews will use their guns to try to stop us, but also their pigs and courts to try to break our spirits." In the same post, he referred to people of the white race as victims of the "Zionist Occupation Government" – repeating the antisemitic conspiracy that a Jewish deep state international conspiracy runs the United States government. Heimbach was enamored with Atomwaffen, calling the group "our friends."

After Charlottesville, RIM's Western European representative Stanislav Shevchuk traveled to the United States to establish connections between RIM and far-right extremist white nationalist groups. Heimbach had become a regular on American news programs, interviewed by the mainstream media where he was given an open platform to share his white nationalist views. Due to Heimbach's public profile in the United States and his connections to Taylor, Mason, Spencer, and his embrace of Atomwaffen, Shevchuk asked to meet with the white nationalist figure. Despite being a highly visible voice for white nationalism in the United States, behind the curtain, he held little influence. The real power brokers in Atomwaffen were Cole, Shea, Russell, and Denton, who was the leader of Atomwaffen in the United States.

Heimbach gave Shevchuk a guided tour of Washington D.C., where they displayed the RIM nationalist flag outside the White House. They also visited Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, and posed in front of a statue of Robert E. Lee with a Confederate flag and the RIM nationalistic flag of black, yellow, and white.

While Heimbach was the bearded smiling face of white nationalism and anti-Semitism, Cole, Shea, Russell, and Denton were moving ahead with a far more violent plan influenced by Mason. In 2016, Cole founded the Washington chapter of Atomwaffen in the shadow of Seattle.

Although Seattle and Portland, Oregon are perceived to be liberal strongholds, both cities lie in what was once the Oregon Territory which passed increasingly aggressive anti-immigration legislation. On June 18, 1844, the Oregon Territory Provisional Government passed a law that Blacks attempting to settle in the territory would be publicly whipped with 39 lashes every six months.

On September 27, 1850, the United States Congress passed the Donation Land Claim Act, which made it illegal for anyone other than whites, or whites of mixed race with indigenous peoples, to settle in the Oregon Territory. The law designated that any white male United States citizen eighteen years or older could claim a 320-acre parcel of land free of charge in parts of modern-day Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Wyoming.

More than 160 years later, hate groups, white nationalist organizations, anti-Semites, and neo-Nazis thrive just out of view. The Proud Boys, III%, Patriot Front, and Patriot Prayer operate in the open and actively recruit members online and among the antivaccination and antigovernment communities.

Overt racism, anti-Black, and anti-immigration legislation and violence continued in the Pacific Northwest for more than a century, the echoes continuing to impact immigration patterns within the United States. The 2020 United Census showed that people who identify as Black make up 1% of Idaho, 2% of Oregon, and 4.3% of Washington – 13.4% of people in the United States identify as Black. For Atomwaffen, Western Washington was a fertile ground to recruit new members who grew up in a monocultural environment and saw everything wrong in the world shimmering in the Seattle skyline.

Cole's life was ordinary before becoming an Atomwaffen Division leader. He grew up in Everett, spent time in Bellingham, and eventually moved to Arlington. By 2015 he was already deeply radicalized and held neo-Nazi beliefs. Members of Atomwaffen practiced firing guns in the forests north of Seattle. In 2018 Cole and Aiden Bruce-Umbaugh, of Olympia, Washington embarked on a one-month trip to Germany, Poland, Ukraine, and allegedly Russia, where they had a purpose.

During that trip, Cole and Bruce-Umbaugh allegedly traveled to St. Petersburg and received combat training from RIM. The pair slipped into Russia through Ukraine using a green corridor in the Donbas. After completing Imperial Legion training, the pair traveled back through Ukraine, entered Poland, and visited the Nazi Concentration Camp Auschwitz. A picture was taken on the train tracks that lead to the extermination camp, Bruce-Umbaugh with a thumbs up and Cole pointing to the sky. Cole wasn't flashing a number one but referencing the extermination of ethnic Jews at the death camp and the ash and smoke rising from the incinerators.

The training in firearms, explosives, moving as a squad, and terrorist tactics were taken back to Washington state. At an abandoned cement factory in Concrete, members of Atomwaffen attended "hate camps" to train in guerilla and urban warfare and fire automatic weapons. Cole, despite never being in the United States military or having received any military training of public record, also set up a second "hate camp" in the Nevada desert near Death Valley.

Cole was also behind the editing and design of propaganda, posters, and slick recruiting videos. The scenes from "Devil's Tower," as the locals called the graffiti-covered ruins, closely resemble the videos made by Russian-proxy troops from Chechnya. The soldiers in those videos are called the "Chechen TikTok unit" and create numerous videos of fighters shooting wildly at nothing and staging raids of empty buildings.



Atomwaffen members holding the organization's flag during weapons training in Concrete, Washington. In 2018, neo-Nazi posters began appearing at churches, government offices, and public areas in Kirkland, Redmond, and Bellevue. The posters and propaganda appeared across the region for almost two years. The content was never connected back to Atomwaffen, but the designs of some of the materials were similar. Emboldened by the sign campaign, Patriot Front also distributed materials in the suburban areas east of Seattle.

A 2018 investigation by ProPublica found Atomwaffen had cells in 23 states and was growing in influence and violence. By 2019 federal, state, county, and local authorities were increasingly concerned by Atomwaffen's actions and rhetoric. Domestic terrorist experts believed that the language was moving from suggesting there should be a race war to purge the United States to discussing direct action. On September 26, 2019, a King County judge granted the Seattle Police Department's request to issue an extreme risk protection order on Cole. In October, authorities seized five military-style rifles, three handguns, gun parts, and ammunition at Cole's residence in Arlington.

Cole had an opportunity to have his guns returned at a hearing a couple of weeks later but instead fled to Montgomery, Texas, where he found refuge with Denton. The extreme risk protection order was automatically extended for a year because Cole defaulted by not attending the hearing. Because of Cole's propaganda abilities and combat training, Denton allegedly made Cole the Texas leader of Atomwaffen. His tenure would be very short-lived, as Shea had already made a mistake and allowed an FBI informant to infiltrate the group.

Only days after arriving in Texas, Cole was involved in a November 4, 2019, traffic stop in the west Texas town of Post, with Bruce-Umbaugh in the passenger seat. Police found marijuana, concentrated THC, an AR-15, two AK-47s, a 9mm pistol, and 1,500 rounds of ammunition. The extreme risk protection order on Cole was flagged during the stop, but Bruce-Umbaugh claimed that the drugs and guns were his. Cole was behind the wheel of the blue Ford Focus with Washington plates, and despite this glaring discrepancy, Bruce-Umbaugh was arrested, and Cole was released.

A month later, the mistake was identified, and a warrant was issued for Cole's arrest for unlawful possession of a firearm with bail set at \$20,000. Bruce-Umbaugh was unable to post bond for his release and languished in a west Texas jail cell, where authorities confronted him about a nascent Atomwaffen plot.

In November 2019, Shea had unknowingly contacted an FBI informant and invited the agent to join a budding operation to threaten journalists across the country. His goal was to "erode the media/states air of legitimacy by showing people they have names and addresses, and hopefully embolden others to act." The informant worked with Shea on his plans and through conversations exposed other Atomwaffen members, including Cole, now hiding in the outskirts of Houston. An undercover agent visited Cole in January 2020, and in a sworn statement claimed the newly minted Atomwaffen Division leader of Texas was wearing a Klu Klux Klan robe.

Later that same month, Atomwaffen threatened a Seattle TV news reporter, the regional director of the Anti-Defamation League Pacific Northwest Chapter, and attempted to threaten a Florida reporter. In the Florida incident, the flyers were affixed to the wrong home.

On February 26, 2020, the group was unraveled by the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force. Operation Erste Saule arrested five members of Atomwaffen in four states. John Cameron Denton and Kaleb J. Cole were arrested in Texas. Cameron Brandon Shea was arrested in Kirkland, Washington, as he walked into a Fred Meyer grocery store to start his work shift. Also arrested were John Garza of Arizona and Tyler "Taylor" Parker-Dipeppe of Florida.

Bruce-Umbaugh was also federally charged while he was still sitting in a west Texas jail cell. On February 3, 2020, he pled guilty to federal charges of possession of firearms and ammunition by a prohibited person.

Three months after Operation Erste Saule and the FBI investigation revealing the military training of Atomwaffen members in St. Petersburg, Russia, the United States Department of State designated the Russia Imperial Movement and members of its leadership as Specially Designated Global Terrorists. It was the first time the United States government had declared a white supremacist group a terrorist organization.

On April 6, 2020, Vorobyev, Nikolayevich, and Denis Garijev were designated as terrorists “for providing training for acts of terrorism that threaten the national security and foreign policy of the United States and being leaders of such a group.”

In September of the same year, National Counterterrorism Center Director Christopher Miller confirmed that United States members of the “extreme right” had traveled to Russia for military training. Testifying before Congress with FBI Director Chris Wray, Miller reported Americans have traveled to Russia to train with RIM and the Imperial Legion. He added that the relationship between extremists in the United States and RIM had remained casual and had not organized into cross-nation terrorism. Miller did not list the names of the organizations or individuals that had trained with the Imperial Legion during his testimony.

The Russian Federation does not consider RIM a terrorist organization. A Kremlin spokesperson defended the group and its military training of foreign fighters declaring, “We are also not going to prohibit foreigners from coming to visit their barracks or receive training. That is its purpose.”

Like many countries that identify as being formed by people with white ancestry, Ukraine has its own problem with neo-Nazi ideology. A lot of digital ink has been spilled about the history of the Azov Battalion and its founding members identifying with white supremacy and Nazi beliefs. While white nationalist extremists founded the Azov Battalion in 2014, the military unit slowly shifted its political alignment and views during the last six years. The early ranks were mostly filled with Russian-speaking residents of eastern Ukraine and were funded partly by Jewish businessperson and billionaire Ihor Kolomoyskyi. The group was colloquially called “The Men In Black” to counter Russia’s “little green men.”

Before the war in Ukraine, members of Atomwaffen were still within the ranks of the Azov Battalion. The battalion ejected the extremists from its ranks in 2020, including those with Atomwaffen.

When the Russia-Ukraine War started on February 24, Russian propaganda had turned the Azovs into mythical monsters while ignoring the thousands of ultranationalist neo-Nazis being trained and deployed to Ukraine under the watchful eye of DOSAAF. It used the group as justification to invade Ukraine for “denazification.” Despite the legends, the Azov Regiment had fewer than 3,000 troops, including Israeli foreign volunteers within the ranks. In May 2022, new insignia for the unit was introduced, wiping the last hints of its white nationalist founding.

While the Kremlin and the social media accounts it backs push a denazification agenda in Ukraine, it is estimated that several thousand members of the Imperial Legion are fighting in Ukraine, concentrated in Izyum and the Donbas. In an ironic twist, ultranationalist mercenaries with the Imperial Legion fought in Mariupol, likely against the Azov Battalion, to “denazify” Ukraine.

While the alleged atrocities of Azov are mostly limited to memes, propaganda, and disinformation, an internal report of the German Federal Intelligence Service BND claims that the Imperial Legion engages in destroying cultural icons that don’t align with the Russian Orthodox Church and tortures and executes Ukrainian prisoners of war.

Unlike Russia, all 50 states ban private militias that are involved in extremist activity or move their presence into the public domain. Despite these regulations, enforcement is almost non-existent. It is estimated there are almost 300 private militias operating in the United States. They represent a fertile ground for recruitment to fight in Ukraine with Russian extremist organizations and Private Military Companies such as the Wagner Group. For those that survive, they bring back that experience, which can be applied to future domestic terrorism.

**Kaleb James Cole** was convicted of conspiracy, three counts of mailing threatening communications, and one count of interfering with a federally protected activity. On January 11, Cole was sentenced to 84 months in federal prison. Cole has been labeled a terrorist by Canada.

**Cameron Brandon Shea** pled guilty to one count of conspiring to commit three offenses against the United States: interference with federally-protected activities because of religion and one count of interfering with a federally protected activity because of religion. On April 25, Shea was sentenced to 36 months in federal prison.

**Aiden Bruce-Umbaugh** pled guilty to possessing firearms and ammunition by a prohibited person. On April 28, 2020, he was sentenced to 30 months in federal prison. While awaiting his sentencing in jail, he bragged to other inmates about his photo at Auschwitz and openly told others he was a Nazi.

**John Cameron Denton** was convicted of conspiracy and a hate crime for “swatting” over 130 people. Denton participated in a conspiracy that conducted swatting attacks between October 2018 and February 2019. Swatting is a harassment tactic that involves deceiving emergency dispatchers into believing that a person or persons are in imminent danger of death or bodily harm and causing the dispatchers to send police and emergency services to an unwitting third party’s address. Denton chose his targets motivated by racial hatred. On May 4, 2021, Denton was sentenced to 41 months in federal prison.

**Johnny Roman Garza** pled guilty to conspiracy to mail threatening communications, to commit stalking, and to interfere with federally protected activities. On September 8, 2020, he was sentenced to 16 months in federal prison.

**Tyler “Taylor” Parker-Dipeppe** pled guilty to conspiracy to mail threatening communications, to commit stalking, and to interfere with federally protected activities. Taylor, who is transgender, uses he/him pronouns and goes by the name Tyler, was abused by his biological father and stepfather growing up. Growing up in Egg Harbor, New Jersey, he was so severely bullied in school for identifying as male, that he brought a lawsuit against the school and was paid a \$50,000 settlement. Parker-Dipeppe fell into Atomwaffen when he was 15 or 16, and found a family within the group while hiding he is transgender.

As the only person in the Florida Atomwaffen cell that owned a car, he and another member drove to St. Petersburg, Florida to affix threatening posters on a journalist’s home, but went to the wrong house. After making the threat, Parker-Dipeppe confessed to his mother what had happened and was afraid the group would learn he is transgender. He confessed his LGBTQIA status to Shea in Washington state and was kicked out of Atomwaffen.

On September 8, 2020, United States District Judge John Coughenour sentenced Parker-Dipeppe to time served, saying he struggled with sentencing but given his history, “enough is enough.” Parker-Dipeppe is now married and employed, and fears that he will be targeted for violence in the future.

**Brandon Clint Russell** pled guilty to one count of possessing an unregistered destructive device and one count of unlawful storage of explosive material. On January 9, 2018, he was sentenced to 60 months in federal prison. While awaiting sentencing in jail, Russell tried to send bomb-making information to members of Atomwaffen. He wrote in one letter, “I don’t care **how** long you put me in jail, your Honor, ... as soon as I get out, I will go right back to fight for my White Race and my America!” Russell will be eligible for release in January 2023.

**Matthew Heimbach’s** life and connections with the white nationalist movement fell apart in 2017. On March 2, 2016, Heimbach was caught on camera harassing and shoving a Black woman at a Donald Trump rally in Louisville, Kentucky. As the incident unfolded, then-candidate Trump yelled, “get her out!” On May 17, 2017, Heimbach was charged with misdemeanor harassment. Heimbach called the charges “politically motivated” and said he “acted pursuant to the directives and requests of Donald J. Trump.” On July 20, 2017, Heimbach cut a plea deal. He was fined \$145 and sentenced to 90 days in jail.

for second-degree disorderly conduct. The sentence was suspended through a deferred adjudication agreement that required Heimbach not to get in further legal trouble for the next two years.

On March 14, 2018, Heimbach was arrested again for two counts of domestic violence assault against his wife, Jessica Parrott, and his father-in-law Matt Parrott. Ms. Parrott believed that Heimbach was having an affair, so she and her father set up a sting operation to confirm her suspicions. Her suspicion was well placed, but to the pair's surprise, Heimbach was having an affair with his mother-in-law. Heimbach allegedly choked his father-in-law until he lost consciousness. Ms. Parrott told police that Heimbach "demanded that I tell the cops to leave," kicked a wall, grabbed her face, and threw me face-first into a bed." Despite violating his deferred adjudication agreement and being charged with two domestic violence assaults, bail was set for \$1,000.

On May 16, 2018, Heimbach was sentenced to 37 days in jail for violating his 2017 plea agreement. In a June 2018 hearing, the Parrotts did not want to pursue charges. After the 2018 domestic violence incident, the Traditionalist Worker Party, which Heimbach founded with Parrott, collapsed.

The neo-Nazi and white nationalist movements have rejected Heimbach, labeling him a traitor, informant, and a communist. In 2020, he stated he was done with identifying with white nationalism.

Heimbach was named a defendant in *Sines v. Kessler* in October 2017 due to the violence that erupted at the Charlottesville Unite the Right rally. Heimbach was found liable for civil conspiracy and ordered to pay \$500,000 in punitive damages.

**James Mason** still writes about Charles Manson, calls for violence against Jews, and his support of neo-Nazi ideals. He is currently considered the leader of Atomwaffen, an allegation he denies. Mason claims that Atomwaffen collapsed in 2020 after the arrests of key leaders.

Mason has a significant criminal record including a 1992 guilty plea of "illegal use of a minor in nudity-oriented materials" after two police raids in 1988 and 1991 found child pornography in his home. He was fined \$500. In 1994 Mason was arrested again and charged with two counts of sexual exploitation of a minor and two counts of contributing to the delinquency of a minor. Mason, who was 42 years old at the time, had threatened his Latina 16-year-old ex-girlfriend and her mother with a gun. He was sentenced to 36 months in prison.

**Jared Taylor** continues to lead the faux think tank American Renaissance. Taylor doesn't view Jews as a threat to a new order. He severed his ties with Heimbach as he became more radicalized by RIM and Atomwaffen. In 2017, Taylor had a front-row VIP seat at the inauguration of President Donald Trump. Taylor is banned from traveling to 26 European Union nations that comprise the Schengen Area.

**Richard Spencer's** life also fell apart in 2017. Spencer planned to hold a neo-Nazi march in Whitefish, Montana, in January 2017. Congressional Representative Ryan Zinke, Senator Steve Daines, Senator Jon Tester, Montana Governor Steve Bullock, and Montana Attorney General Tim Fox condemned the planned event. The community of Whitefish rallied to create a counterprotest, and the march never happened. Spencer became a pariah in Montana and was forced to move to an apartment in Virginia.

In 2014 while doing a speaking tour in Hungary, Spencer enraged Prime Minister Viktor Orban so much, that the right-wing leader pressed through legislation that banned Spencer – the Polish government passed a similar measure. In 2018 Spencer was detained in Iceland trying to enter Sweden and was forced to return to the United States due to his ban on travel in the Schengen Area.

Also, in 2018, his Russian-born wife filed for divorce, accusing him of being abusive in their marriage. Audio recordings and text messages sent to Nina Kouprianova threatened to break her nose and encouraged her to commit suicide.

	<p>Spencer was threatened with jail time in June 2020, owing more than \$60,000 to the guardian ad litem assigned to defend the interests of the two children he had with his ex-wife. He was also named a defendant in <i>Sines v. Kessler</i> in October 2017 and ordered to pay \$500,000 in punitive damages.</p> <p><b>Stanislav Shevchuk</b> was sanctioned by the United States Department of Treasury on June 15, 2022, for reaching out to individuals in the United States for the purpose of identifying racially and ethnically motivated violent extremists to support fundraising, training, and recruitment.</p> <p><b>Russia Imperialist Movement</b> – RIM does not support Russian President Vladimir Putin and his regime. Still, they see his policies and the war in Ukraine as a means to move their white nationalistic plan forward. It is believed several thousand mercenaries are part of the Imperial Legion fighting in Ukraine, the Central African Republic, Libya, and Syria. The Imperialist Movement maintains Russian sanction training centers in St. Petersburg and Moscow (both in Russia). It is believed the Imperial Legion assists in training contract volunteers of the Russian army and forced conscripts of the DNR and LNR north of Izium, Ukraine. Imperial Legion fighters report directly to the Russian armed forces command structure and work cooperatively with the Russian Federation Armed Forces, DNR, and LNR separatists. They continue to train foreign fighters in combat and terrorist tactics worldwide with the blessing of the Kremlin.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/06 Taliban leader: no attacks from Afghan soil</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://apnews.com/article/afghanistan-religion-united-states-taliban-osama-bin-laden-23c9e636a45f909b487eba3a20157a82">https://apnews.com/article/afghanistan-religion-united-states-taliban-osama-bin-laden-23c9e636a45f909b487eba3a20157a82</a>
GIST	<p>ISLAMABAD (AP) — Taliban supreme leader Mullah Haibatullah Akhundzada said Wednesday that Afghan soil will not be used to launch attacks against other countries, and he asked the international community to not interfere in Afghanistan’s internal affairs.</p> <p>The Taliban say they are adhering to an agreement they signed with the United States in 2020 — before retaking power — in which they promised to fight terrorists. Since their takeover last year, they have repeatedly said Afghanistan would not be used as a launching pad for attacks against other countries.</p> <p>“We assure our neighbors, the region and the world that we will not allow anyone to use our territory to threaten the security of other countries. We also want other countries not to interfere in our internal affairs,” Akhundzada said in an address ahead of the Eid al-Adha holiday.</p> <p>The Taliban were ousted by a U.S.-led coalition in 2001 for harboring Osama bin Laden, mastermind of the 9/11 attacks in the United States. The religious group captured power again in mid-August, during the chaotic last weeks of the U.S. and NATO withdrawal from Afghanistan.</p> <p>The international community has been wary of any recognition or cooperation with the Taliban, especially after they restricted the rights of women and minorities — measures that harken back to their harsh rule when they were last in power in the late 1990s.</p> <p>Akhundzada, the spiritual chief of the Taliban, has remained a reclusive figure. He rose to leader of the Islamist movement in a swift transition of power after a 2016 U.S. drone strike killed his predecessor, Mullah Akhtar Mansour.</p> <p>After taking over, Akhundzada secured the backing of al-Qaida chief Ayman al-Zawahiri, who showered the cleric with praise, calling him “the emir of the faithful.” The endorsement by bin Laden’s heir helped seal his jihadist credentials with the Taliban’s longtime allies.</p> <p>However, in his Eid message Akhundzada said: “Within the framework of mutual interaction and commitment, we want good, diplomatic, economic and political relations with the world, including the United States, and we consider this in the interest of all sides.”</p>

	<p>A three-day assembly of Islamic clerics and tribal elders in the Afghan capital that concluded Saturday included pledges of support for the Taliban and calls on the international community to recognize the country's Taliban-led government.</p> <p>In a surprise development, the reclusive Akhundzada came to Kabul from his base in southern Kandahar province and addressed the gathering Friday. It was believed to be his first visit to the Afghan capital since the Taliban seized power.</p> <p>In an hour-long speech at the assembly carried by state radio, Akhundzada called the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan a "victory for the Muslim world."</p> <p>A powerful earthquake in June killed more than 1,000 people in eastern Afghanistan, igniting yet another crisis for the economically struggling country. Overstretched aid groups already keeping millions of Afghans alive rushed supplies to the quake victims, but most countries responded tepidly to Taliban calls for international help.</p> <p>The international cut-off of Afghanistan's financing has deepened the country's economic collapse and fueled its humanitarian crises.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/05 DOJ settles lawsuit; post-9/11 roundup</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.huffpost.com/entry/doj-lawsuit-9-11-settle-detained-without-charges_n_62c4f86ee4b0d740197c4cb1">https://www.huffpost.com/entry/doj-lawsuit-9-11-settle-detained-without-charges_n_62c4f86ee4b0d740197c4cb1</a>
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON (AP) — The <a href="#">Justice Department</a> on Tuesday settled a decades-old lawsuit filed by a group of men who were rounded up by the government in the weeks <a href="#">after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks</a> and held in a federal jail in New York in conditions the department's own watchdog called abusive and harsh.</p> <p>The settlement announced Tuesday calls for a \$98,000 payout to be paid out among the six men who filed the suit and were held without terrorism charges at the Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn.</p> <p>The men — Ahmer Iqbal Abbasi, Anser Mehmood, Benamar Benatta, Ahmed Khalifa, Saeed Hammouda, and Purna Raj Bajracharya — said they were detained in restrictive conditions and, in some cases, abused by members of the staff.</p> <p>The settlement is somewhat unusual because federal courts at nearly every level, including the Supreme Court, had thrown out large chunks of the lawsuit. A federal district court judge threw out the remaining part of the suit last year. Though the plaintiffs filed an appeal, there had been little action in the case for months.</p> <p>Though the Justice Department does not admit guilt as part of the settlement agreement, Bureau of Prisons Director Michael Carvajal wrote a letter to each of the men saying the Justice Department had determined they were "held in excessively restrictive and unduly harsh conditions of confinement and a number of individuals were physically and verbally abused by certain MDC officers."</p> <p>The letter went on to say: "Under the exceptional circumstances of this unique case and before the facts have been fully litigated or there has been any final judgment by the court in this case the Federal Bureau of Prisons has agreed to provide funds to the former Warden of the MDC, Dennis Hasty, to indemnify him for the settlement of your claims. This will resolve all of your claims in this litigation."</p> <p>"I don't know that the director of the Bureau of Prisons has ever signed a letter of this nature before to individual clients, so that is unique," said Rachel Meeropol, senior staff attorney with the Center for Constitutional Rights, who represents the men.</p> <p>Meeropol called the court battle a failure of the justice system, pointing to limitations on claims against federal officials.</p>



“Under the court actions, there’s no way people for people who have been injured to get justice,” Meeropol said in an interview with The Associated Press. “Instead we’re seeing this pretty amazing work around with the defendants finding a way to make themselves be held responsible when the court said no. I think it’s a unique acknowledgment of this situation and the way that what happened were procedural obstacles to true justice.”

The Justice Department declined to comment.

The lawsuit originally sought accountability from high-level members of George W. Bush administration, and a settlement was reached in 2008 with the original five plaintiffs. Others were added.

In 2017 the Supreme Court threw out parts of the suit but tossed one claim, against the former warden of the federal lockup, back to a lower court. A federal judge in Brooklyn dismissed the remaining parts of the suit last year, finding that the men did not have the right to sue for their injuries, though the judge did not address whether there were constitutional violations.

The settlement closes a chapter on a troubling era in federal criminal justice when Muslim, Arab and South Asian men were rounded up in the days and weeks after the Sept. 11 attacks. Soon, more than 1,000 were arrested in sweeps across the New York metropolitan area and nationwide. Most were charged only with overstaying visas and deported back to their home countries. But before that happened, many were held in detention for months, with little outside contact, especially with their families.

They were, according to the 9/11 Commission report, arrested as “special interest” detainees. Immigration hearings were closed, detainee communication was limited, and bond was denied until the detainees were cleared of terrorist connections. Identities were kept secret.

A review conducted by the Justice Department’s inspector general said the Justice Department’s “hold until cleared” policy meant a significant percentage of the detainees stayed for months despite immigration officials questioning the legality of the prolonged detentions and even though there were no indications they were connected to terrorism. Compounding that, they faced “a pattern of physical and verbal abuse” particularly at the federal jail in Brooklyn. Conditions were, the report said, “unduly harsh.”

“I am glad that the case is coming to an end after two decades of litigation. However, it is a bittersweet conclusion for me,” Benatta said in a statement released by the Center for Constitutional Rights, one of the plaintiff attorneys, along with Covington & Burling LLP, and attorneys Michael Winger and Alexander Reinert.

“I don’t believe justice is properly served, considering the detrimental consequences the defendants’ actions have had on my life,” he said. “I can’t help but feel let down by the whole judicial system – federal courts had the opportunity to remedy the situation but chose not to intervene, and, by doing so, they left the door open for future mistreatment and abuse to take place without any ramifications.”

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HEADLINE	07/05 Taliban dig up founding leader’s buried car
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jul/05/taliban-excavates-founding-leaders-car-buried-to-escape-us-troops">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jul/05/taliban-excavates-founding-leaders-car-buried-to-escape-us-troops</a>
GIST	<p>The Taliban have dug up a white Toyota used by their <a href="#">founding leader, Mullah Mohammad Omar</a>, to escape into hiding in southern Afghanistan after the US invasion.</p> <p>Senior officials have called for the vehicle to be put on display at the national museum in Kabul. It already houses the cars and coaches of former kings and prime ministers, including one with bulletproof glass fragmented by an assassination attempt.</p>

“A man travelled in this car who took part in the most amazing events in history,” Anas Haqqani, the brother of the interior minister, Sirajuddin Haqqani, and an influential government figure, [wrote on Twitter](#).

“He relied on God Almighty, he commanded (Taliban forces) in an unequal war against dozens of invading countries, and won. This memorial ... should be kept in the country’s national museum.”

Defence minister Mullah Muhammad Yaqoub – Mullah Omar’s son – ordered officials to uncover the car, which had been buried for around 20 years, a Taliban source said.

Images of the excavation, shared [on Twitter](#) by a Taliban-linked activist, showed the car, covered in a sheet of plastic, being dug out by hand from beside the mud wall of a traditional village compound in southern Zabul province.

“This Toyota wagon was used by the late Amir to travel from Kandahar to Zabul province during the start of US-led invasion,” Muhammad Jalal, said. “It is in good condition.”

Bette Dam, author of a biography of the Taliban founder, Looking for the Enemy, said Omar was known to have left his Kandahar base in a white Toyota at the end of 2001 after US-backed forces toppled the government in Kabul.

He would spend the rest of his life [within walking distance of US bases there](#) despite a \$10m bounty on his head. US forces once searched a house where he was hiding, an aide told Dam, but did not find the entrance to a secret room that hid him.

Omar died in 2013, but the movement did not [admit his death until two years later](#). Omar had effectively handed over practical control of the insurgency to his deputies in 2001, when he went into hiding.

At the time the Taliban were trying to surrender to the new US-backed government in Kabul led by Hamid Karzai, the president, but the US refused to accept their plea.

“The car can be seen as significant – Omar used it during a historical moment for peace,” said Dam.

“When he entered this white Toyota, and left his office, most of his leadership had surrendered...”

“He himself took at that moment the decision to disappear to his grandfather’s land. I didn’t know about the hiding of the car but I am sure they didn’t feel safe at all ... because soon the hunting down of the surrendered Taliban started, so he buried the car and was hiding.”

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HEADLINE	<b>07/06 Nigeria: jihadists attack jail, 600 escape</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://wnyt.com/associated-press/international/jihadis-attack-jail-in-nigerias-capital-600-inmates-escape/">https://wnyt.com/associated-press/international/jihadis-attack-jail-in-nigerias-capital-600-inmates-escape/</a>
GIST	<p>KUJE, ABUJA (AP) — At least 600 inmates escaped in a jailbreak in Nigeria’s capital city, officials said Wednesday, blaming the attack on Islamic extremist rebels.</p> <p>About 300 have been recaptured, authorities said.</p> <p>The “very determined” rebels attacked the Kuje maximum prison in Abuja on Tuesday night with “very high-grade explosives,” killing one guard on duty, according to Shuaib Belgore, permanent secretary of Nigeria’s Ministry of Interior.</p> <p>Explosions and gunfire were heard at about 10 p.m. in the Kuje area of Abuja when the attackers arrived and forced their way into the prison through a hole created by the explosives.</p> <p>The Islamic extremist rebels who attacked the prison have waged an insurgency in the country’s northeast for over a decade. Their attack on the detention facility freed many of their members who are inmates, prison officials said.</p>

	<p>“We understand they are Boko Haram. They came specifically for their co-conspirators,” said Belgore. “Right now, we have retrieved about 300 out of about 600 that got out of the jail.”</p> <p>Nigeria’s jihadi rebels have carried out several jailbreaks in the country’s northeast in recent years, but this is the first in the capital city.</p> <p>Nigeria’s extremist insurgency, carried out by Boko Haram and an offshoot known as the Islamic State Central African Province, is blamed for violence that has caused the deaths of more than 35,000 people and displaced more than 2 million people, according to the U.N. The prolonged instability, hunger and lack of health services caused by the insurgency have indirectly caused the deaths of more than 300,000 additional people, says the U.N.</p> <p>The extremists’ violence is the most serious security challenge in Nigeria, Africa’s most populous country with 206 million people, which also is battling violence in the northwest area by rebellious herdsmen and a separatist movement in the country’s south.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/05 Repatriated from ISIS camp to Iraq homes</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/07/05/iraq-syria-al-hol-return/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/07/05/iraq-syria-al-hol-return/</a>
GIST	<p>QAYYARAH, Iraq — Iraq’s midday summer sun blasted down as the women huddled in the shade of their tent and reflected on how far they had come. The distance to Iraq from al-Hol detention camp in Syria was not far, just a few miles, but the journey home had taken years.</p> <p>The situation back in the Syrian camp had been hellish: Frequent killings in the night caused dread to descend with the darkness. Years after the official defeat of the Islamic State, its followers there had turned the camp into a new theater of violence and control.</p> <p>The return to their homes in Iraq through this new camp, which signs declared a rehabilitation center, prompted Hadeer Khalid, 34, to shed tears of relief. “To be back in our country means everything,” she said, as her children giggled impishly in the corner. “The situation for them was so bad there,” she said, glancing at the smallest ones. “We couldn’t breathe.”</p> <p>Al-Hol camp remains one of the most intractable problems for the region — effectively an open-air prison holding tens of thousands of mostly women and children from around the world, many with family ties to the Islamist militants and few with home governments willing to accept them back.</p> <p>In Iraq, the Islamic State’s rise and fall have left deep scars, and memories of the bloodshed are fresh. The question looming across the militants’ former territories is how, or indeed if, the communities that were ripped apart can be stitched back together again — and whether they will accept their former neighbors returning from the camp.</p> <p>Unlike most countries, Iraq is actually trying to bring its people home. Diplomats from the Western countries that have refused to take back their citizens have described el-Hol as a festering sore on the global conscience. “Governments have tried to wash their hands of those people,” one official said, speaking on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the issue in their home capital.</p> <p>On Tuesday, France did announce the repatriation of 51 women and children from Syria in the only return since the fall of the Islamic State in 2019.</p> <p>Since May 2021, almost 2,500 Iraqis have been repatriated from al-Hol, which houses about 30,000 Iraqis among its 55,000 inhabitants. More returns are expected to follow, officials say.</p> <p>Although Iraq’s remaining camps for the internally displaced have often grown ramshackle from lack of funding and neglect — the government closed most of them last year — the facility housing the al-Hol returnees is orderly and well run. In some cases, the inhabitants have painted bright murals on the outside of their tents. There are psychologists giving sessions to those with signs of trauma.</p>

When Washington Post reporters visited the Jeddah camp, almost all returnees interviewed said they had been in al-Hol since 2017, meaning that they had fled the Islamic State's "caliphate" some time before its fighters made a final stand in the Syrian border hamlet of Baghouz.

Women often say they had little control over family decision-making. In some cases, a husband or a father had joined the group as a fighter. In others, male relatives had been ordered to continue working in municipal jobs.

Psychologists who have visited the Iraqi camp say signs of trauma are most acute among the children. They can be anxious and withdrawn. Involuntary urination due to stress or fear is not uncommon. Small noises can make them jump. Some have had suicidal thoughts.

Residents said they had mostly kept their children inside their tents in al-Hol, fearing violence and indoctrination outside, and so sons and daughters are only now learning to play in the open air. "It's taken them a while to feel like they can do that," said Alia Ibrahim, a 65-year-old from Tal Afar, a predominantly Shiite Turkmen city that Islamic State forces controlled for three years.

Her 3-year-old granddaughter, Maria, was sleeping on the floor of the tent, alongside a doll with its arms ripped off. Although her father, Abdullah, who also spent years in al-Hol, wanted to take his little girl home to Tal Afar, he was wary. "It's not an easy idea," he said. "We know that people will judge us."

If getting people across the border is one challenge, taking them the rest of the way home is yet another.

Across government ministries, high-ceilinged conference rooms and town hall meetings, Iraqi officials are trying to work out how to do that.

In the city of Irbil recently, Saeed Jayashi, an adviser to one of Iraq's national security bodies, looked around a table of notables from next-door Nineveh province who had gathered in a busy hotel to hear what he had to say ahead of the planned return of several hundred people to their hometowns.

He took a deep breath, and began.

"Each Iraqi, whether he was good or bad, we're responsible for them," he told the group. "Please be honest with me today. Whatever is concerning you — I'm all ears."

Many agreed that children should not be punished for the crimes of their parents. But most of their questions still focused on the security screening process. Participants had watched lurid videos from al-Hol showing women and children attacking media crews, and chanting defiantly in support of the Islamic State.

"We have a problem — these people still believe in the ideology," said one man. Another nodded. "We don't want to bring ISIS people back," he told the room.

Iraqi authorities say the slow pace of repatriation is partly attributable to the lengthy screening process. Individual returnees are vetted by multiple security agencies for involvement in alleged crimes, although rights groups point out that the criteria for decision-making is not transparent.

As the conversation returned repeatedly to how Iraqi authorities could truly know what was in the minds of the returnees, Jayashi addressed the questions one by one.

"We should be clear here," he said. "We're not bringing back ISIS people, we're bringing back innocent people. We have to separate out these terms."

More than 80 percent of the millions of Iraqi civilians displaced by the war against the Islamic State have returned home. But for those whose families joined the group, acceptance has varied. While there are few

reports of violent retribution against returning families, many describe lives of destitution and ostracism. Mothers do not like their children playing with the returnees. Neighbors who once shared meals now keep their doors closed.

In Mosul's Old City, its skyline still jagged after U.S. airstrikes pulverized the district during the militants' final stand, most residents said they struggle to believe that anyone from al-Hol could ever return. "You think they'd come back here?" 56-year-old Ghassan Abdul Ghani, a shopkeeper, asked incredulously.

The militant group called Mosul its capital, and it ruled with an iron fist for three years. With the traumas of that period still etched in homes and bodies, residents of the Old City said they would have a hard time living alongside returnees from al-Hol.

"I mean, it's impossible. No one would accept it," said Abdul Ghani.

Forty miles south in the town of Qayyarah, where several families are due to return in coming months, residents were divided on who should be allowed to come home. Most agreed that women and children should be treated as "without guilt," but the idea of the returnees living among them made many anxious.

In his pharmacy on a side street, Jamal Jihad, 42, was resigned to it, although he didn't like it much. "At the end of the day, it's the officials who are going to decide this, not us," he said as he hustled about the pharmacy he'd rebuilt once the militants had left.

"People here have suffered a lot," he said. "Whatever happens now, we'll just have to accept it."

Nearby, 47-year-old Fares Ahmed said he could not even picture the families' return. He paused a second, and his brow creased sharply, as if a jolt of pain had passed through. "They killed seven of my brothers when they controlled this place," he said quietly. "I collected their bodies from the morgue."

Surely no one in this small town would allow anyone linked to the group to come back, he said, would they?

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## Suspicious, Unusual

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HEADLINE	07/04 Arson 90yrs ago led to MLB in Seattle?
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.king5.com/article/sports/mlb/mariners/arson-fire-90-years-ago-major-league-baseball-seattle/281-31a4deed-279d-44f1-9bab-749bd267bf77">https://www.king5.com/article/sports/mlb/mariners/arson-fire-90-years-ago-major-league-baseball-seattle/281-31a4deed-279d-44f1-9bab-749bd267bf77</a>
GIST	<p>SEATTLE — If we told you the <a href="#">Seattle Mariners</a> were sparked from an actual spark, would you know the story?</p> <p>If we told you the fire of a fanbase was rooted in an actual fire, would you know who to thank?</p> <p>You have to go back 90 years ago to July 4, 1932.</p> <p>"Not a lot of people I think are aware of it now," Seattle baseball historian Dave Eskenazi said. "The further back you go, the more interesting it is and Dugdale is certainly a major, major part of our early baseball history."</p> <p>Dugdale was both a person and a park.</p> <p><a href="#">Daniel Dugdale was a former professional baseball player</a> from the midwest.</p> <p>He came to the northwest in 1898 because of the Klondike Gold Rush; he got rich off real estate in Seattle; and he built a baseball stadium for the <a href="#">minor league Seattle Indians</a>.</p>

The stadium was both a cathedral and a catastrophe waiting to happen.

"On July 4th, 1932, after a doubleheader at the ballpark around midnight calls started coming in for a [fire at the ballpark](#)," Eskenazi said. "(It) turned out to be a three-alarm fire that burned it to the ground. They thought it could be an errant cigarette. They thought it could be the firework show on the 4th of July that went awry and caused it. They didn't find out until three years later that it was actually arson. His name was Robert Bruce Driscoll."

Driscoll was targeting America's past time, on America's day, perhaps because of an unfulfilled American Dream.

"He felt beaten down by the world," Eskenazi said. "He was unemployed, he was homeless, he slept in boxcars."

Driscoll would confess to over 140 fires in Seattle, according to records from the fire department, saying he did it "because of my destitute circumstance and because I was sore at the world in general."

"Driscoll used some of these discarded programs he found outside the stadium along with some wood and some kindling to start the fire," Eskenazi said.

But Driscoll did not just start a fire. He started a series of events that would lead to [Major League Baseball](#) (MLB) coming to Seattle.

"You can make the case that the burning of Dugdale Park did [change our baseball history for the positive](#)," Eskenazi said. "Not initially, because the Seattle Indians then had to play their games at Civic Field, which was not even a baseball park. But this led to the team being sold to Emil Sick and the building of Sick's Seattle Stadium on the same site as the burned down Dugdale Park. This was the home of the Seattle Rainiers who were one of the most successful and popular minor league teams in history."

Their success was leveraged into a consolation prize and then the ultimate prize.

"If not for the Seattle Rainiers, perhaps we never would've had the Seattle Pilots, the first Major League team in 1969," Eskenazi said. "Which led directly to the Seattle Mariners."

One generation's tragedy led to another generation's triumph.

"There's a through-line and a thread where if Dugdale Park didn't burn down, we may not have had Major League Baseball," Eskenazi said.

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HEADLINE	<b>07/05 Austrian Alps observatory early snow melt</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/jul/05/snow-sonnblick-austrian-alps-worlds-highest-observatory-melting">https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/jul/05/snow-sonnblick-austrian-alps-worlds-highest-observatory-melting</a>
GIST	<p>The snow at the highest observatory in the world to be operated all-year-round is expected to completely melt in the next few days, the earliest time on record.</p> <p>Scientists at the <a href="#">Sonnblick observatory</a> in the Austrian Central Alps, which is 3,106 metres (10,190ft) above sea level, have been shocked and dismayed to see the snow depleting so quickly.</p> <p>Some years the peak is covered in snow all summer. But this year it has melted more than a month before the previous record time, which was 13 August in 1963 and 2003.</p> <p>Alexander Orlik, a climatologist at the Zentralanstalt für Meteorologie und Geodynamik, said: "The snow depth today was 3cm. I expect it to be completely gone by today or the day after. It is not usual for the</p>



	<p>snow to melt completely down. In some years the snow cover is there the whole summer. But the earliest it has before is August.”</p> <p>Throughout June, snow has been at the lowest levels since records began in 1938.</p> <p>Orlik said: “On 30 June, the snow depth on Sonnblick was 39cm. The previous lowest snow depth in June was 120cm, in 1942. In an average June there is 307cm of snow at the end of the month. Last year in June, the minimum snow depth was 362cm.”</p> <p>The observatory <a href="#">publishes the snow level</a> every 10 minutes, along with other data. Rainfall affects the measurements. But the steady downwards trend is clear to see, and as of Tuesday the snow was down to just a couple of centimetres.</p> <p>Sonnblick was built in 1886, for scientists to explore the higher levels of the atmosphere. Since then it has been used by meteorologists to forecast the weather, and hosts the mountain observatory with the longest and most reliable climatic data.</p> <p>The heating climate in <a href="#">Europe</a>, where there have been scorching heatwaves, has caused much of the snow and ice on the mountains to melt unusually quickly.</p> <p>This had a <a href="#">tragic outcome this week</a> at the Marmolada mountain in Italy, where at least seven people died after a glacier collapsed, causing an avalanche. Scientists linked the disaster to the climate crisis, as the ice has become weakened due to sustained heat.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/05 Utah Great Salt Lake hits new historic low</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/jul/05/utah-great-salt-lake-new-low-drought">https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/jul/05/utah-great-salt-lake-new-low-drought</a>
GIST	<p>The Great Salt Lake has hit a new historic low for the second time in less than a year, a dire milestone as the US west continues to weather a historic megadrought.</p> <p>The Utah department of natural resources said in a news release on Monday that the Great Salt Lake dipped over the weekend to 4,190.1ft (1,277.1 meters).</p> <p>That is lower than the previous historic low set in October, which at the time matched a 170-year record low. Lake levels are expected to keep dropping until fall or winter, the agency said, as conditions exacerbated by the climate crisis continue to put a strain on water levels.</p> <p>The giant lake near Salt Lake City is the largest natural lake west of the Mississippi. Its dwindling water levels have put millions of migrating birds at risk and threaten a lake-based economy that is worth an estimated \$1.3bn in mineral extraction, brine shrimp and recreation. The expanding amount of exposed lakebed could also send arsenic-laced dust into the air that millions breathe, scientists say.</p> <p>The state’s Republican-led legislature is trying to find ways to reverse the trend, but it will not be easy. <a href="#">Water</a> has been diverted away from the lake for years for homes and crops in the nation’s fastest-growing state that is also one of the driest.</p> <p>Elsewhere in the American west, lakes and reservoirs are continuing to hit new lows. In California, the state’s two largest reservoirs – Lake Oroville and Shasta Lake – are at <a href="#">critically dry levels</a>. And on the Arizona-Nevada border, a shrinking Lake Mead continues to reveal its mysteries as the waters recede – including a <a href="#">body</a> in a barrel and a <a href="#">second world war-era</a> boat.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/05 Teens in suits banned from theaters</b>
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SOURCE	<a href="https://komonews.com/news/nation-world/teens-in-suits-banned-from-movie-theaters-due-to-minions-inspired-tiktok-trend-film-animated-rise-gru-gentleminions-social-media-flash-mobs">https://komonews.com/news/nation-world/teens-in-suits-banned-from-movie-theaters-due-to-minions-inspired-tiktok-trend-film-animated-rise-gru-gentleminions-social-media-flash-mobs</a>
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON (TND) — A social media trend centered around a new movie has led some theaters to outright disallow teenagers wearing suits to attend any screenings.</p> <p>The trend, apparently originating on TikTok, is called "<a href="#">#Gentleminions</a>" and focuses on the recently released animated movie "<a href="#">Minions: The Rise of Gru.</a>"</p> <p>Videos featuring flash-mob-style groups of teens engaging in the trend have garnered millions of views across various social media platforms.</p> <p>For the trend, teenagers gather in large groups, dress in formal attire and attend screenings of the movie. They cheer throughout the movie, bring bananas and mimic the movie's titular character "Gru" with mannerisms and speech.</p> <p>While some may see the actions as harmless, others claim the trend is disruptive and even destructive at times.</p> <p>One theater had to cancel future screenings of the film due to what it called "stunningly bad behaviour," <a href="#">the BBC reports</a>.</p> <p>The teens reportedly vandalized the theater, abused staff and threw objects during the screening.</p> <p>Some cinemas faced a "massive" negative financial impact due to refunds requested over the trend-inspired bad behavior, <a href="#">The Mirror reports</a>.</p> <p><a href="#">One post on Twitter</a> featured a photo of a printed notice posted outside a theater that says, "Due to recent disturbances following the #gentleminions trend, any group of guests in formal attire will be refused entry for showing of 'Minions: The Rise of Gru.' Thank you."</p> <p>Other videos show teens in suits being told to leave theaters or being warned that their behavior <a href="#">could get them thrown out</a>.</p> <p>The Minions movie is marketed as a family-friendly kids' film, which apparently led some parents with young children to lambast the teens for being disruptive to their movie-going experience.</p> <p>It's been absolutely heartbreaking. We've had families who won't even go back into the screen when we've tried to sort it out, families leaving before the film has even started, and of course the children have been in tears," Cinema manager Daniel Phillips-Smith told BBC News.</p> <p>However, while the viral trend may be perceived as disruptive by some, it may have played a part in the movie's box office success.</p> <p>The animated film earned an estimated \$108.5 million in ticket sales in North America, Universal Pictures reportedly said.</p> <p>Worldwide, the movie has brought in more than \$218 million so far, according to BoxOfficeMojo.com.</p> <p>While some movie theaters may not appreciate the social media trend, it seems the makers of the movies apparently do.</p> <p>"To everyone showing up to @Minions in suits: we see you and we love you. [hands making a heart emoji]" <a href="#">tweeted Universal Studios</a>.</p> <p>The official Minions TikTok account also <a href="#">posted a video</a> of a minion looking out of a window while clips of teenagers wearing suits fade in and out in the background.</p>

	"Bobspeed you gentleminions," the official Minions account said on TikTok.
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HEADLINE	<b>07/05 Warming world a hazard for Alpine glaciers</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/warming-world-creates-hazard-alpine-glaciers-86264975">https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/warming-world-creates-hazard-alpine-glaciers-86264975</a>
GIST	<p>Italy was enduring a prolonged heat wave before a massive piece of Alpine glacier broke off and killed hikers on Sunday and experts say climate change will make those hot, destabilizing conditions more common.</p> <p>Seven hikers died and several others are unaccounted for after large chunks of ice and rock from the Marmolada glacier sped down the mountain in an avalanche. Higher temperatures coupled with below-average winter snowfall were among the factors that may have triggered the event, experts said.</p> <p>The exact role of climate change in specific events is complicated and large portions of ice can break off Alpine glaciers naturally. But climate change is fueling hotter temperatures that can lead to more ice and snow melt, said Brian Menounos, a professor at the University of Northern British Columbia who researches climate change and glaciers.</p> <p>“Glaciers are directly responding to a warmer climate, a warmer planet,” said Menounos. “They can respond to long-term changes, but they can also respond to these extreme events,” like heat waves.</p> <p>The Marmolada glacier is in the Dolomite mountains, a range of steep, dramatic peaks in northeast Italy. The region is already being altered by climate change. Between the late 19th and early 21st century, temperatures in the Alps have increased twice as quickly as the global average, according to Copernicus, the European climate modeling group. The U.N. has identified the Mediterranean basin that includes Italy as a climate change hot spot prone to heat waves. Glaciers are in retreat throughout Italy, the Alps and across the world.</p> <p>The government's National Research Council said the Marmolada glacier has been shrinking for decades and may vanish in 25 to 30 years.</p> <p>Before the avalanche, daytime temperatures at the glacier’s altitude were around 50F (10C) when they normally don't rise much above freezing. The prolonged period of hot weather at high altitudes created a special set of circumstances, said Tobias Bolch who researches glaciers at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland.</p> <p>Guglielmina Adele Diolaiuti, a professor at the University of Milan studying glaciers, said pictures of the ice that remains part of the glacier tell a story about what likely happened.</p> <p>The top two thirds of the ice face appears slightly dirty, indicating it was exposed to air.</p> <p>“It’s clear that this part of the vertical ice cliff was the internal part of a crevasse,” she said. A crevasse is a deep opening in a glacier.</p> <p>The bottom is bluer, indicating it was attached, said Diolaiuti.</p> <p>Water may have accumulated in the crevasse, adding weight and pressure on the glacier. It may also have loosened the glacier’s grip on the steep rock it was sitting on, experts said.</p> <p>Anyone who has tried to shovel ice off a cold driveway knows that it fastens itself to the pavement, said Richard Alley, a Penn State professor who studies ice sheets. But when the weather warms, the ice loosens its hold.</p> <p>“All of a sudden, whoosh, you can get it off,” Alley said.</p>

A local official said the portion that broke loose is estimated to be 220 yards (200 meters) wide, 85 yards (80 meters) high and 65 yards (60 meters) deep. It rushed down the mountain at nearly 200 miles per hour (300 kph).

The hikers were likely taken completely by surprise.

In addition to the heat, there was below normal snowfall this winter. Northern Italy is struggling through its worst drought in 70 years. When there is less snow, ice is exposed and impurities can collect on the surface of the glacier, turning the surface a darker color that traps more heat. The extra heat melts the ice and snow faster, St. Andrews' Bolch said.

On Tuesday, rescue efforts turned up equipment and body parts. After rain made rescue difficult on Monday, the sun reappeared on Tuesday.

According to Daniel Farinotti, a professor of glaciology at ETH Zurich and WSL Birmensdorf, Switzerland, climate change might reduce the risk of certain avalanches. Glaciers need cold weather and snowfall to grow. If glaciers grow on a steep slope, ice that is pushed over ledges can break and cause avalanches. But with warming temperatures, glaciers retreat, and smaller glaciers create fewer hazards, he said.

In the case of the avalanche on Sunday, melting ice and snow is the likely culprit, experts said.

"The ice, the snow, is very sensitive to increases in temperatures, so we expect that these kinds of events will increase in frequency and intensity in the future," said Roberta Paranuzio who researches climate change at the National Research Council of Italy.

While some avalanches occur in isolated areas, the area around the Marmolada glacier is popular with hikers.

"The really warm weather was one of the reasons why the event occurred, but on the other hand, this really warm weather made it attractive for mountaineers to climb it," Bolch said.

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## Crime, Criminals

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HEADLINE	07/05 Climate activists glue selves to painting
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2022/07/05/Britain-London-Royal-Academy-oil-protest-glue/8781657054325/">https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2022/07/05/Britain-London-Royal-Academy-oil-protest-glue/8781657054325/</a>
GIST	<p>July 5 (UPI) -- For the second day in a row a group of climate activists glued themselves to a painting at a London art museum Tuesday to protest oil and gas extraction.</p> <p>Members of the organization Just Stop Oil participated in the protest at the Royal Academy of Art, using superglue to attach themselves to a copy of Leonardo da Vinci's <i>The Last Supper</i>. The painting wasn't original to the Italian Renaissance master, but was instead completed by two of his students -- Giampietrino and Giovanni Antonio Boltraffio.</p> <p>The demonstrators, some wearing bright orange "Just Stop Oil" T-shirts, spray painted "No new oil" on the wall underneath the painting.</p> <p>One of the protesters compared the British government's issuance of oil and gas licenses to Judas' betrayal of <a href="#">Jesus</a>, the subject of the painting.</p>

	<p>"Da Vinci said that art is the queen of all sciences communicating knowledge to all the generations of the world. The science still isn't being heard," one of the participants, Tristan Strange, said in <a href="#">a statement</a> released after the protest.</p> <p>"We are continually fed comforting lies that downplay the urgency of the climate crisis we face so that fossil fuel interests can continue to reap huge profits whilst the global south and our children are condemned to live in a potential hell. I call on all artists to harness every ounce of their creativity sounding the alarm in the hope that it cuts through the misinformation. Nothing is more critical at the moment."</p> <p>A representative for the Royal Academy told <a href="#">CNN</a> the four protesters stayed in the room with the painting for more than 3 hours before police removed them. Officials closed down the gallery room to the public at the time and the painting was being evaluated for any potential damage.</p> <p>The group used the same protest technique, gluing themselves to <a href="#">The Hay Wain</a> by John Constable at London's National Gallery on Monday; to <a href="#">Tomson's Aeolian Harp</a> by J.M.W. Turner at the Manchester Art Gallery on Friday; to <a href="#">Peach Trees in Blossom</a> by <a href="#">Vincent van Gogh</a> at London's Courtauld Gallery on Thursday; and to <a href="#">My Heart's in the Highlands</a> by Horatio McCulloch at the Glasgow School of Art in Scotland on Wednesday.</p> <p>Five protesters <a href="#">also disrupted</a> the British Grand Prix race at Silverstone on Sunday by sitting on the track.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/05 Uvalde mayor fears 'coverup'</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.newsmax.com/newsfront/uvalde-texas-lawenforcement-investigation/2022/07/05/id/1077471/">https://www.newsmax.com/newsfront/uvalde-texas-lawenforcement-investigation/2022/07/05/id/1077471/</a>
GIST	<p>Uvalde, Texas Mayor Don McLaughlin told <a href="#">CNN</a> in an interview Tuesday he fears there may be a "cover-up" regarding what happened during the Robb Elementary School shooting, according to <a href="#">Axios</a>.</p> <p>"I'm not confident, 100%, in [Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS)] because I think it's a cover-up," McLaughlin said. DPS Director Colonel Steve McCraw, McLaughlin adds, is "covering up for maybe his agencies."</p> <p>The Texas mayor asserts that the full story hasn't come out yet, and Texas DPS has not been transparent, adding he hasn't had a briefing "from anybody" since the day after the shooting. "At this point, I don't know what to believe and what not to believe ... Every agency in that hallway is gonna have to share the blame."</p> <p>Following the shooting, law enforcement retracted multiple statements, sowing confusion in establishing a narrative of events. "I lost confidence," McLaughlin says, "because the narrative changed from DPS so many times and when we asked questions, we weren't getting answers."</p> <p>McLaughlin has since asked the Department of Justice to investigate law enforcement's response. That work has now begun.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/05 Violent 4<sup>th</sup> July weekend 570 shot, 220 killed</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cbsnews.com/news/us-gun-violence-shootings-220-killed-july-4-weekend/">https://www.cbsnews.com/news/us-gun-violence-shootings-220-killed-july-4-weekend/</a>
GIST	<p>Gun violence spiked over Fourth of July weekend, with shootings reported in nearly every U.S. state that killed a total of at least 220 people and wounded close to 570 others, according to the <a href="#">Gun Violence Archive</a>.</p> <p>The database, which collects information about fatalities and injuries linked to incidents involving discharged firearms, updated its records early Tuesday. Published tallies show the number of weekend shootings was almost equal to the number of resulting injuries, with well over 500 instances of shootings documented nationwide between Friday and Monday. There were only five states where one or more shootings were not reported in that time frame.</p>

Of all gun violence incidents accounted for during the holiday weekend, [at least 11](#) were classified as mass shootings by the Gun Violence Archive. Any situation where four or more people, excluding the shooter, are killed or wounded by gunshots is considered a mass shooting.

The database lists 315 mass shootings across the country since the beginning of this year, and roughly 22,500 deaths caused by any form of gun violence. The number of injuries so far traced to gun violence approaches the total death toll.

Seeing an increase in gun violence around Fourth of July is not rare in the U.S., and this past weekend's reports from the Gun Violence Archive mirror those released in previous years. In 2021, [more than 180 people](#) were killed and 516 were injured in shootings that took place during the same holiday weekend.

Devastating impacts of gun violence were widespread over the holiday, but certain areas were hit harder than others. In Highland Park, an Illinois suburb located about 25 miles north of Chicago, at least seven people died and more than two dozen were wounded in [a mass shooting](#) targeting the neighborhood's Fourth of July parade. Some of the victims, including at least one child, were in critical condition when they were transported from the scene, Highland Park Fire Chief Joe Schrage said Monday.

About nine hours after the gunman opened fire on attendees at the Highland Park parade, authorities detained [a person of interest](#), whom they identified as Robert Crimo III, in connection with the shooting. Crimo has not been charged in the attack.

But the Highland Park shooting was far from the only crime involving gun violence in the Chicago area over the weekend. Eight deaths and 68 injuries from gun violence were confirmed in city in the days leading up to Fourth of July, as well as on the holiday itself, according to [CBS Chicago](#). The victims' ages reportedly ranged from 17 to 90 years old.

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HEADLINE	<b>07/05 Minneapolis park 4 July shooting: 8 injured</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/nation/8-hurt-some-critically-in-july-4-minneapolis-park-shooting/">https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/nation/8-hurt-some-critically-in-july-4-minneapolis-park-shooting/</a>
GIST	<p>MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Eight people were wounded, some critically, in a shooting in a Minneapolis park during unofficial Fourth of July celebrations, according to officials.</p> <p>Police said the shooting took place about 11:30 p.m. Monday at Boom Island Park.</p> <p>“We were just watching fireworks and we just heard a whole bunch of shots,” Kaayla Laanaee told WCCO-TV. “I just heard them going over my head to the trees. I was just ducking by the lake.”</p> <p>First responders converged on the park and police began investigating and laying evidence markers. Police say many in the large group that had gathered in the park left before officers arrived. They say some shooting victims arrived at local hospitals on their own and police were notified by medical staff.</p> <p>Minneapolis Park Police said there was no formal July Fourth event or fireworks at the park, but that people had gathered there to celebrate the holiday.</p> <p>Police say no one is in custody. Authorities have not released details about the eight who ended up in hospitals.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/05 Shooting suspect left trail of red flags</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/05/us/many-details-about-the-attack-remained-unclear-a-day-after-the-shooting.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/05/us/many-details-about-the-attack-remained-unclear-a-day-after-the-shooting.html</a>
GIST	HIGHLAND PARK, Ill. — The man accused of killing seven people and wounding dozens of others in a shooting that terrorized a Fourth of July parade had been investigated by local police before. Officers had



responded in 2019 after someone reported that he had tried to kill himself. And they came to his home a few months later — seizing his knife collection — after a family member reported that he had pledged to “kill everyone.”

Still, in the years since, the man, Robert E. Crimo III, 21, was able to legally buy several guns in Illinois, including a high-powered rifle that officials said was used in the attack Monday in Highland Park, a lakefront suburb north of Chicago. On Tuesday, Crimo was charged with seven counts of first-degree murder.

The details of those prior police visits raised questions about whether Illinois authorities missed opportunities to use their relatively strict firearm laws to block Crimo’s gun purchases, and about whether a newly signed federal gun law might have made a difference had it been in force earlier. In a statement, the Illinois State Police defended its decision to grant Crimo a permit to own a gun, which he applied for in December 2019, three months after police took the knives from his home.

In Highland Park, police said that Crimo appeared to have prepared for weeks to attack the parade Monday morning, and that he had used a fire escape to climb atop a downtown business to fire dozens of rounds from a high-powered rifle into the crowd. Afterward, they said, he escaped by discarding his rifle and blending into the crowd while wearing women’s clothing.

Authorities released a picture that appeared to show him wearing an American flag scarf around his neck — perhaps, they said, to conceal his distinctive neck tattoos.

Crimo was arrested about eight hours later when a resident spotted him on a highway in a nearby suburb. Although authorities said they had uncovered no evidence that the shooting was motivated by racial or religious hate, they acknowledged that they did not know what motivated the attack. Prosecutors said Crimo would make an initial court appearance Wednesday. It was not immediately clear whether he had a lawyer.

The sequence of events in Highland Park — in which law enforcement was told about a troubled young man, one who later acquired guns and was accused of using them to kill — was not unique. In a massacre at a high school in Parkland, Florida, in 2018, the FBI received tips about the person who has pleaded guilty in the case, Nikolas Cruz, before the shooting occurred. And a judge ruled that the Air Force was mostly responsible for a mass shooting at a Texas church in 2017 because it had not entered the gunman’s domestic violence conviction into a federal database.

The attack Monday was not the first to raise questions about vulnerabilities in Illinois’ strict gun laws, which require a permit to own a weapon and which include a red flag provision that allows law enforcement to seize weapons from people deemed dangerous.

“We must vastly increase awareness and education about this red flag law,” Eric Rinehart, the Lake County state’s attorney, said Tuesday when he announced the murder charges. He also called for the passage of a ban on assault weapons. A man convicted of killing four people at a Waffle House restaurant in Tennessee in 2018 had previously surrendered his guns to law enforcement in his Illinois hometown. But those guns, including the AR-15-style rifle used in the attack, were returned to the gunman’s father, officials said at the time.

The laws also came under scrutiny in 2019, when a man fatally shot five people at an Aurora, Illinois, factory where he worked. That man, who died in a shootout with police, had been banned from owning a gun for five years but continued to possess one.

In Highland Park, officials said Crimo did not have a firearm owner’s identification card at the time officers seized 16 knives, a dagger and a sword from his home in 2019. They said they believed he bought several guns in the years since, including the rifle used Monday and another that was in his car when he was arrested. Those guns were bought legally by Crimo in Illinois, officials said, meaning he would have had to have applied for and received a FOID card from state police.

A spokesperson for Gov. J.B. Pritzker, a Democrat who supports gun control laws, declined to answer questions Tuesday about whether the governor believed that the state's laws had worked as intended in the Highland Park case, but issued a statement calling for stricter gun laws and greater awareness of existing restrictions.

"Unfortunately, every time a mass shooting occurs it serves as a stark reminder that our gun laws often fall short of the rigorous standards that feel like common sense to most Americans," the governor said.

Pritzker's office directed inquiries about Crimo's case to the state police, who defended how they handled it, saying, in part, that "at the time of FOID application review in January of 2020, there was insufficient basis to establish a clear and present danger and deny the FOID application." The state police said that Crimo's father had sponsored his application for the permit.

Steven Greenberg, a lawyer representing the father, acknowledged that the father had done so and said there were possible explanations why. Greenberg said his client did not believe there was an issue and might not have understood what happened with the knife seizure because it did not happen in his house. "It was perfectly legal," he said of sponsoring the gun permit.

The shooting in Highland Park also closely followed the passage of a federal law that has been hailed as the most significant piece of gun legislation in decades. That measure, passed in the wake of mass shootings in Buffalo, New York, and Uvalde, Texas, enhances background checks for buyers ages 18 to 21, requiring for the first time that juvenile records, including mental health records beginning at age 16, be vetted for material that identifies young buyers as a danger to themselves or others.

While many details about Crimo's personal history remained hazy, it was possible — but not certain — that he could have been flagged for additional scrutiny had the federal law been passed earlier. Officials did not provide the exact dates that Crimo bought his rifles but indicated that they had been bought in 2020 and 2021. Crimo turned 21 last year.

As prosecutors announced charges, residents of Highland Park gathered for prayer vigils, lamented a shattered sense of suburban security and grieved the deaths of their neighbors.

The victims included Nicolas Toledo-Zaragoza, 78, who had recently moved back to Highland Park from Mexico, and who went to the parade with his family despite not wanting to; Jacquelyn Sundheim, 63, a beloved employee of a local synagogue whom one friend called "a beautiful ray of light"; Stephen Straus, a financial adviser who, at age 88, still took the train every day to his office at a brokerage firm in Chicago; Katherine Goldstein, 64; and Irina and Kevin McCarthy, ages 35 and 37, a couple who left behind a toddler son.

"It's just sad," said Adrienne Rosenblatt, a neighbor of the McCarthys.

Authorities had not yet publicly identified a seventh victim whose death was announced Tuesday.

Around Highland Park, questions also spread about Crimo, who was from a well-known local family and whose father once ran unsuccessfully for mayor.

Nicolas and Andres Lopez, brothers who went to Highland Park High School with Crimo, said they used to be friends with him. Crimo at one point dropped out of high school, the brothers said, but they found nothing during the time when they were friends to suggest a problem.

"He wasn't a quiet kid who was dark then," said Andres Lopez, 23. "He was quiet because he was nerdy. He wasn't sinister."

	In the years since, concerning signs mounted. Crimo posted music videos online that seemed to refer to mass shootings, one of which included cartoon images of a gunman pointing a large rifle, and of other figures spurting blood. Later in that video, the gunman lies in a pool of blood near police cars.
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HEADLINE	<b>07/05 Interpol: arrests; Africa firearms trafficking</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/border-security/arrests-thousands-of-seizures-in-african-clampdown-on-firearms-trafficking/">https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/border-security/arrests-thousands-of-seizures-in-african-clampdown-on-firearms-trafficking/</a>
GIST	<p>An international police operation coordinated by INTERPOL targeting the movement of illicit firearms in Central and West Africa has led to some 120 arrests and the seizure of firearms, gold, drugs, fake medication, wildlife products and cash.</p> <p>Operation Trigger VIII (June 13 – 19) involved some 520 law enforcement officials targeting 35 hotspots across eight African countries: Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania and Niger.</p> <p>More than 20,000 checks were carried out against INTERPOL’s global databases, resulting in the recovery of 480 firearms and 42 arrests tied to firearms offenses. In addition, 14 organized crime networks were identified and dismantled.</p> <p>Authorities seized some 6,000 firearm parts, components, ammunition and explosives, and EUR 110,000 in cash.</p> <p>Reinforced border controls and surveillance once again demonstrated that organized crime groups are benefiting from a convergence of crimes and using the same routes for a number of illicit activities.</p> <p>An additional 78 arrests were made in connection with trafficking in illicit goods, with more than 45 tonnes seized, including more than three tonnes of fake medication, 1.5 tonnes of drugs (cannabis, amphetamines and opioids) and more than 10,000 liters of contraband petrol.</p> <p>Some 40 tonnes of fins of endangered shark species were recovered in Guinea, while authorities in the Central African Republic dismantled a network suspected of supplying poachers with firearms and ammunition. The Democratic Republic of Congo reported the seizure of 141 elephant tusks.</p> <p>With illicit gold mining suspected of financing terrorism and armed militant groups in the Sahel region, authorities also launched more than 85 active investigations into the links between firearms trafficking, transnational organized crime and terrorism financing. More than 26 g of illicitly mined gold and 170 kg of explosives were seized during the operation.</p> <p>Souley Boubacar, Director General of Niger’s National Police, underlined “the collective security role” played by Operation Trigger VIII and called for further such operations to address regional security challenges.</p> <p>In this respect, investigations into terrorist financing are ongoing in Mali and Niger, after illicit gold mining sites were uncovered and shut down in Mali.</p> <p>“In a Sahel region plagued by insecurity, I welcome the undertaking of such an operation, which contributes to the strengthening of international police cooperation, the only guarantee of success in the fight against terrorism and other forms of crime,” said Roger Ouedraogo, Director General of Burkina Faso’s National Police.</p> <p>“Operations such as Trigger VIII underscore how firearms trafficking represents a grave transnational threat, facilitating the activities of organized crime networks and terrorist groups,” said INTERPOL Secretary General Jürgen Stock. “They also highlight the connections between different types of criminality and the continued need for cooperation between countries and across regions.”</p>

	<p>The results of the operation were down to the Trigger operational model involving a year-long preparatory phase that saw awareness campaigns and national training activities in the targeted regions, ending with pre-operational coordination and exercises in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire.</p> <p>Training was provided on firearms identification, financial investigations, INTERPOL's global databases and the use of the INTERPOL Mobile Device (IMD) at hotspots and border control points to check individuals and vehicles in real time.</p> <p>The training also focused on the profiling, identification and tracing of ammunition and explosives, as well as follow-up investigations on recovered firearms via the use of the INTERPOL Illicit Arms Records and Tracing Management System (iARMS).</p> <p>Operation Trigger VIII was supported by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs through Project Target, and the European Union through Project Disrupt in partnership with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/05 Sumner PD probes hate crimes on churches</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://mynorthwest.com/3549366/sumner-police-investigating-hates-crimes-involving-churches/">https://mynorthwest.com/3549366/sumner-police-investigating-hates-crimes-involving-churches/</a>
GIST	<p>Sumner Police are investigating suspected hate crimes at two houses of worship that were vandalized early Tuesday morning.</p> <p>The vandalism was reported by members of the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses.</p> <p>Carmen Palmer, Communications Director for the City of Sumner, said a man spray-painted the building. The person tagged it with the anarchist symbol and an upside-down cross.</p> <p>While there is surveillance video, it is hard to identify any potential suspects, according to Palmer.</p> <p>Across the street, the Bible Missionary Church was tagged with RVW, the anarchist symbol, and an upside-down cross.</p> <p>Sumner Police are investigating this as property damage and a hate crime.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/06 Mass shootings deadlier, more common</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/jul/06/us-mass-shootings-deadlier-more-common">https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/jul/06/us-mass-shootings-deadlier-more-common</a>
GIST	<p><b>The last five years have seen more mass shootings than any other comparable time span dating back to 1966, with 31 massacres from 2017 through 2021, compared with 24 from 2012 through 2016</b></p> <p>On the morning of 4 July, President Joe Biden hailed the day as one to "celebrate the goodness of our nation".</p> <p>Less than an hour after his 9.25am EST tweet, a gunman on a rooftop opened fire into a crowd of spectators who gathered to enjoy <a href="#">a Fourth of July parade in a Chicago suburb</a>. He killed seven people and injured dozens.</p> <p>Monday's mass shooting in Highland Park, Illinois, brought fresh anguish to a nation already shaken this year by the murders of schoolchildren in <a href="#">Uvalde</a>, Texas, and Black shoppers in <a href="#">Buffalo</a>, New York.</p> <p>If it feels like mass shootings have become more frequent, that intuition is correct, according to data analysis by the Marshall Project.</p>

Under one of the most conservative definitions of “mass shootings”, in which a gunman slaughters four or more strangers in a public place, the number of these crimes has indeed been climbing in the last few years – and they have higher death tolls, as well.

Mass shootings account for just a fraction of the daily toll of firearm deaths in the US, where [about 124 people die](#) every day in other acts of gun violence.

Our analysis is based on data from the Violence Project, a nonprofit research group that uses a narrow definition of mass shootings adopted from the congressional research service, which advises federal lawmakers.

Thirty-one of these massacres occurred from 2017 through 2021, compared with 24 from 2012 through 2016, according to the Violence Project data. We compared five-year periods so we could measure trends over time, rather than focus on the dip to two incidents in 2020, which researchers attributed to the Covid-19 lockdown, or the spike caused by the 2017 mass shooting in [Las Vegas](#) that left 58 dead. The last five years have seen more mass shootings than any other comparable time span dating back to 1966.

The Violence Project [defines mass shootings](#) as single incidents in which four or more people are killed (not including the shooter), in public locations, such as schools, stores, or workplaces. It excludes murders that occur because of domestic violence, or in the course of another crime, such as armed robbery or gang violence.

Under this definition, there have been four mass shootings so far in 2022: Highland Park, Uvalde, Buffalo and [Tulsa](#), Oklahoma, where a gunman stormed a doctor’s office at a hospital complex, killing four people before taking his own life. The count puts 2022 on pace with last year, when there were a total of six mass shootings.

As mass shootings in the US reached a record high, so did the number of deaths and injuries. From 2017 to 2021, perpetrators killed 299 people – about a third more than the 221 fatalities in the five-year period that ended in 2016. The number of people injured was five times higher.

Much of the increase in both deaths and injuries was attributable to the deadliest mass shooting in modern US history, which occurred in 2017 at a music festival in Las Vegas. A gunman, armed with multiple assault weapons, killed 58 victims. An additional 887 people were injured, including scores hurt in a stampede, according to the Violence Project. But even excluding Las Vegas, the number of dead and injured was still higher in the last half decade when compared with the five years ending in 2016.

The mass shooting on 4 July was the fourth in fewer than three months. In all four, the gunmen used high-powered weapons, law enforcement authorities said. President Biden last month signed the most significant [gun safety measure](#) in decades, though the new law does not include a ban on assault weapons and high-capacity magazines, a provision Biden and Democrats had wanted.

Our analysis shows that in the past five years, assault-style weapons have been used in nearly half of mass shootings, compared to a third of them in the previous five years.

There is no national, legal definition of a “mass shooting”. Several organizations track mass shootings, but use different yardsticks: some count only incidents in which three or more people are killed; others measure incidents with at least four people killed or injured.

The lack of consensus on what qualifies as a mass shooting makes the problem confusing to talk about, let alone try to address, said Jacob Kaplan, a criminologist at the school of public and international affairs at Princeton University.

“If you have one definition of a mass shooting and I have a different definition, it’s hard to really even have a conversation,” Kaplan said. “It’s not like one is obviously right, or obviously wrong. It’s just that

you have to be very precise about what you're talking about. And that's something that tends to get lost in the media and definitely with politicians."

Some researchers stress the importance of including injuries as well as fatalities when analyzing mass shootings. [Jaclyn Schildkraut](#), a criminal justice professor at the State University of New York at Oswego, said that in recent years victims are more likely to be injured than killed because of faster police and paramedic responses and medical advances. Schildkraut is the interim director of the [Regional Gun Violence Research Consortium](#), based at the Rockefeller Institute of Government, a public policy thinktank based in Albany, New York.

She [defines a mass shooting](#) as an incident at a public place with multiple victims, both wounded or killed, and the shooter targets victims either randomly or "for their symbolic value", such as Black congregants at a church. By this count, there have been 402 mass shootings with 3,590 deaths or injuries from 1966 to 2020, with a steep increase in recent years. More than half of these shootings – 219 – unfolded at the perpetrator's workplace or school.

Other measures of mass shootings have also increased in recent years.

The [Gun Violence Archive](#), an independent research group, uses a broad definition of a mass shooting: an incident in which four or more people are killed or injured, not including the shooter. It includes shootings linked to gang activity, street fights or domestic violence.

The group counted 2,403 mass shootings from 2017 to 2021, with 2,495 dead and 10,225 injured. The group's data reveals a steep rise in recent years: 692 mass shootings in 2021, up 66% from 2019's total of 417.

The group tallied 318 [mass shootings](#) as of 3pm on 5 July. That puts 2022 on track to finish as one of the deadliest years since the group began monitoring these crimes in 2014.

Like the Violence Project, [Everytown for Gun Safety defines a mass shooting](#) as an incident in which four or more people are killed with a firearm, excluding the perpetrator. Everytown counts incidents that "occur in both public and private spaces, have any number of shooters, and result from a myriad of motives, such as group violence, domestic violence, or terrorist violence." By the group's count, there have been 110 incidents in the last five years, compared to 96 from 2012 through 2016.

The FBI tracks what it calls "active shooters": one or more individuals actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a populated area. Those cases have almost doubled since 2017, to [61 incidents in 2021](#) that left 103 people dead and injured 140 others.

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HEADLINE	<b>07/05 Highland Park shooting death toll rises to 7</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/jul/05/highland-park-fourth-of-july-shooting-victims">https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/jul/05/highland-park-fourth-of-july-shooting-victims</a>
GIST	<p>The first details have begun to emerge of the victims of the mass shooting in Highland Park, Illinois, after a lone gunman fired into a crowd of people watching the Chicago suburb's Fourth of July parade.</p> <p>The shooting killed seven people and injured dozens, triggering panic and shock across the US as yet another attack disrupted what is usually a day of patriotic celebration.</p> <p>The first victim to be identified by their family was 76-year-old grandfather Nicolas Toledo. The New York Times <a href="#">reported</a> that Toledo, who used a wheelchair, had not wanted to attend the parade but needed to stay with his family due to his disabilities.</p> <p>Toledo was sitting in his wheelchair when he was hit. "We were all in shock," Xochil Toledo, his granddaughter, told the Times. "We thought it was part of the parade ... We realized our grandfather was hit. We saw blood and everything splattered on to us."</p>



His family said that Toledo held dual citizenship with Mexico and had come to live permanently in the US so his family could look after him after he was injured in a car accident in Highland Park. “We brought him over here so he could have a better life. His sons wanted to take care of him and be more in his life, and then this tragedy happened,” his granddaughter said.

Another victim has been named by a local synagogue as Jacki Sundheim. The North Shore Congregation Israel confirmed to local media that Sundheim was a lifelong congregant and staffer.

In a statement, the synagogue said: “Our beloved Jacki Sundheim was one of the victims murdered at the Highland Park parade.”

It added: “Jacki’s work, kindness and warmth touched us all, from her early days teaching at the Gates of Learning Preschool to guiding innumerable among us through life’s moments of joy and sorrow as our Events and B’nei Mitzvah Coordinator – all of this with tireless dedication ...

“There are no words sufficient to express the depth of our grief for Jacki’s death and sympathy for her family and loved ones.”

A law enforcement official confirmed a third victim was 88-year-old Steve Straus. Straus was a financial broker who worked in Chicago, commuting into the city every day, reported the New York Times.

“He was an honorable man who worked his whole life,” said Straus’s niece to the Times. “He should not have had to die this way.”

Straus, a Chicago financial adviser, was one of the first observers at the parade and attended it every year, his grandchildren said. Maxwell and Tobias Straus described their grandfather as a kind and active man who loved walking, biking and attending community events.

“The way he lived life, you’d think he was still middle-aged,” Maxwell Straus said in an interview.

The two brothers recalled Sunday night dinners with their grandparents as a favorite tradition. They said they had eaten with him the night before he was killed.

“America’s gun culture is killing grandparents,” said Maxwell Straus. “It’s very, just, terrible.”

At a press conference late on Tuesday, local authorities also announced the names and ages of three more victims. A seventh victim – and so far the last – has not yet been identified. The names of the other three were Katherine Goldstein, 64, Irina McCarthy, 35, and Kevin McCarthy, 37.

A GoFundMe page set up to help loved ones of Irina and Kevin McCarthy cover their funeral expenses described them as a married couple raising a 2-year-old son, Aiden.

The two were killed while at the parade with their boy, who was found wandering alone after the shooting and will now be raised by his grandparents, the GoFundMe page said.

“He will have a long road ahead to heal, find stability, and ultimately navigate life as an orphan,” the page said of Aiden, which added that donations would also support the toddler.

Irina McCarthy’s childhood friend Angela Vella described McCarthy as fun, personable and “somewhat of a tomboy” who liked to dress up nicely.

“She definitely had her own style, which I always admired,” Vella said in a short interview.

Katherine Goldstein was a mother of two daughters in their early 20s, Cassie and Alana. Goldstein’s husband described her as an easygoing travel companion who was always game to visit far-flung locales.

	“She didn’t complain,” Craig Goldstein told the New York Times. “She was always along for the ride.”
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HEADLINE	<b>07/05 Tacoma auto thefts up 88% in a year</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/tacoma/auto-thefts-increase-pierce-county-2021/281-2a10a9f1-2068-4cfd-b9da-69aafa49a6bb">https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/tacoma/auto-thefts-increase-pierce-county-2021/281-2a10a9f1-2068-4cfd-b9da-69aafa49a6bb</a>
GIST	<p>PIERCE COUNTY, Wash. — It's the last thing a car owner needs to deal with: getting their car stolen.</p> <p>Data from law enforcement agencies in Washington show car thefts are up significantly in more recent years than in previous ones.</p> <p>"If you think that they're doing it just for the joyride, that's false," Pierce County Sheriff's Department spokesperson Sgt. Darren Moss said.</p> <p>The concern is car thefts are usually linked to other crimes, sometimes violent ones, according to Moss.</p> <p>A social media post made by a joint auto theft task force group detailed a long list of auto thefts in Pierce County during the July 4th weekend, which showed about 43 reported car thefts during the holiday weekend alone.</p> <p>KING 5 asked if 43 thefts during a single weekend is considered high.</p> <p>The Puget Sound Auto Theft Task Force (PSATTF), which comprises multiple law enforcement agencies, said 43 actually trends low, compared to overall averages.</p> <p>In April 2021, the average number of auto thefts in Pierce County was 14 per day, compared to 27 per day in April 2022. The average in May 2021 in Pierce County was 11, compared to 22 per day in May 2022, according to Sgt. Jeff Carroll with the PSATTF. Numbers for June this year were not yet available.</p> <p>In Pierce County overall, there were a little more than 900 auto thefts reported countywide per month from January through March -- an average of about 30 auto thefts per day, according to Moss.</p> <p>But while 43 is considered lower-than-average for a single weekend, auto theft numbers have actually been much higher in recent years compared to pre-pandemic years.</p> <p>The PSATTF, as well as a Tacoma Police Department spokesperson, and Moss with the Pierce County Sheriff's Department pointed to similar reasons why auto thefts are on the rise.</p> <p>They include a July 2021 state legislature law that limited law enforcement from making certain pursuits.</p> <p>"That's one of the things that really gave the criminals the okay to put the pedal to the medal and take off," Moss said.</p> <p>Moss also said jail space has been limited due to COVID restrictions.</p> <p>"Our jail has been locked down with COVID so we weren't allowed to book for misdemeanors or lower-level felonies, which include auto theft and burglary," Moss said.</p> <p>Law enforcement agencies have asked the Washington Legislature to amend the unintended consequences of the pursuit law, but the bill did not make it through the most recent legislative session.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/05 Suspect in Highland Park parade massacre</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/US/robert-bobby-crimo-iii-suspect-highland-park-parade/story?id=86236026">https://abcnews.go.com/US/robert-bobby-crimo-iii-suspect-highland-park-parade/story?id=86236026</a>

## GIST

The 21-year-old suspect in the [mass shooting](#) at a Fourth of July parade in suburban Chicago that left seven dead and more than 30 wounded is an aspiring rapper with an apparent trail of violent social media posts that investigators are combing through.

Multiple law enforcement officers detained Robert "Bobby" Crimo III at gunpoint following a car chase hours after Monday's massacre in the North Shore town of Highland Park.

Investigators are poring over social media posts on numerous platforms, including Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, TikTok, YouTube and Discord, which they believe are associated with Crimo.

Lake County Sheriff's Office officials said at a news conference Tuesday that the investigation alleges that Crimo planned the attack for several weeks and opened fire on parade-goers from the roof of a business he accessed by an affixed ladder. Police alleged that Crimo fired more than 70 shots during the episode.

He was dressed in women's clothing, apparently to blend in with the panicked crowd as he made his getaway, said Lake County Sheriff's Sgt. Christopher Covelli.

Covelli said Crimo legally purchased the high-powered AR-15-style rifle he allegedly used in the attack in Illinois. Covelli said a second rifle, also purchased legally, was found in the car Crimo was driving.

He said Crimo also legally bought three other weapons, including two pistols, that investigators seized from his father's home.

The Lake County Sheriff's Office has told its law enforcement partners that Crimo is answering investigators' questions and has made statements taking responsibility for the attack, according to multiple law enforcement sources.

Lake County State's Attorney Eric Rinehart announced Tuesday afternoon that Crimo has been charged with seven counts of first-degree murder. Rinehart said more charges are expected.

Steve Greenberg, an attorney for Crimo's parents, said the family has retained two lawyers, Tom Durkin and Josh Herman, to represent their son. There was no immediate comment from the defense attorneys and Greenberg said it was unclear if the lawyers have yet met with the suspect.

"We are all mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers, and this is a terrible tragedy for many families, the victims, the parade-goers, the community, and our own. Our hearts, thoughts, and prayers go out to everybody," Crimo's parents said in a statement Greenberg released Tuesday afternoon.

The lawyer added, "The parents request that all respect their privacy as they try to sort thru this tragedy."

At a news conference Tuesday afternoon, Covelli detailed two prior contacts Crimo had with law enforcement. He said police checked on Crimo after he attempted suicide in April 2019, but no action was taken.

Covelli said police were called to Crimo's home in September 2019 by a family member who claimed Crimo allegedly threatened to kill everyone in his house. He said no charges were filed in the incident, but police seized 16 knives, a dagger and a sword from Crimo and reported the incident to the Illinois State Police.

Sgt. Delilah Garcia of the Illinois State Police said no action was taken against Crimo in the September 2019 incident. She said at the time Crimo was not in possession of any firearms and did not have a firearms owner identification card or a pending application for one to revoke.

The suspect lived with his uncle, Paul Crimo, who told ABC News that he has been interviewed by the FBI. Paul Crimo told ABC News that while his nephew lived with him, they rarely had conversations. He said his nephew mostly focused on his music and stayed in his room and on his phone.

He said his nephew never espoused political views or mentioned weapons or firearms. He said his nephew didn't have a job or many friends.

He said he last spoke to his nephew around 5 p.m. Sunday, but they just said hello while passing each other in the home they shared in the North Shore town of Highland Park.

The uncle said his nephew was driving his mother's car when he was taken into custody. He said his nephew's car was still parked in front of his home on Tuesday. The car has a number 47 decal on the driver's side door, matching a tattoo on his face.

A law enforcement source briefed on the case told ABC News Tuesday that investigators have identified posts from several social media platforms alleged to be tied to Crimo that discuss or depict acts of violence -- including shooting people.

The Institute for Strategic Dialogue, which monitors and analyzes extremist content online, said in a briefing statement that it appears Crimo had an extensive online presence and that posts allegedly associated with him included mental health issues, hatred and a gravitation toward far-right and neo-fascist thoughts and ideologies.

One online post allegedly made by Crimo about 10 months ago includes a video that appears to be a portion of the Fourth of July parade route in Highland Park that was accompanied by music with a death theme, according to Strategic Dialogue.

Crimo, according to Strategic Dialogue, appears to have created videos that depicted mass shootings, as well as his own death. One video Crimo is believed to have posted portrays the aftermath of a school shooting and another uses animated figures to depict a mass shooting that mimicked the crime, according to Strategic Dialogue.

The posts believed to be from Crimo also include an online symbol for himself resembling a hate symbol associated with neo-Nazis, according to Strategic Dialogue. Similarly, Crimo's content features the aesthetics of niche neo-fascist subcultures, the group said.

"He was not just crying out for help, he was screaming out for it," said John Cohen, an ABC News contributor and the former acting undersecretary for intelligence and counterterrorism coordinator at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Covelli said Crimo was identified through surveillance video and by tracing the gun he allegedly left at the scene. Investigators also have not commented on a possible motive for the mass shooting.

Meanwhile, the wife of the rabbi at Chabad House in Highland Park told ABC News that Crimo came to their Passover service this year. She said Crimo left on his own after his presence raised concerns at the synagogue.

The synagogue now has armed security, given the heightened concerns of violence at religious institutions around the country.

Covelli said at Tuesday's news conference that investigators have not unearthed any evidence suggesting a racial or religious motivation for the rampage.

Crimo was taken into custody more than eight hours after the Highland Park rampage when an all-points bulletin was issued naming him as a person of interest and describing the 2010 silver Honda Fit he borrowed from his mother. A North Chicago police officer spotted the car on U.S. Route 41 and attempted to stop Crimo, who led police on a brief chase before stopping and surrendering, authorities said.

Crimo was apparently raised in Highland Park, where his father, Robert Crimo Jr., owns a delicatessen.

Crimo's father ran for mayor of Highland Park in 2019, but was handily defeated by incumbent Mayor Nancy Rotering, according to election results.

A Highland Park business owner who grew up with the elder Crimo told ABC News that he was "trying his hardest to help his community" but "probably didn't have that much of a chance."

Following Monday's shooting, Rotering spoke of the tragedy during a news conference.

"On a day that we came together to celebrate community and freedom, we are instead mourning the tragic loss of life and struggling with the terror that was brought upon us," Rotering said.

Heavily tattooed, including inked patterns on his face, neck and hands, Crimo was an amateur rapper who went by the stage name Awake the Rapper. One music video posted on YouTube appears to depict the aftermath of a school shooting in which Crimo is filmed alone in a classroom dressed in a helmet and bulletproof vest. A separate video shows Crimo sitting on a bed rapping while a newspaper featuring Lee Harvey Oswald hangs on the wall behind him.

Another video allegedly posted by Crimo shows a cartoon depiction of a person aiming a long gun at other characters with their hands up and on the ground, and a character wearing a shirt with a logo used on Crimo's alleged social media accounts. The video also shows a cartoon character being shot by police.

Law enforcement sources told ABC News that Crimo's music often referenced death and dying.

Spotify, where Crimo had a little over 16,000 monthly listeners, and Apple have removed Crimo's accounts and music.

A YouTube spokesperson said in a statement to ABC News, "Following the horrific incident in Highland Park, our Trust and Safety teams identified and quickly removed violative content, in accordance with our Community Guidelines."

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HEADLINE	<b>07/05 Parade mass shooting suspect charged</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/US/shooting-reported-4th-july-parade-chicago-suburb-highland/story?id=86186529">https://abcnews.go.com/US/shooting-reported-4th-july-parade-chicago-suburb-highland/story?id=86186529</a>
GIST	<p>The 21-year-old suspect in the July Fourth parade mass shooting in Highland Park, Illinois, was charged Tuesday with seven counts of first-degree murder.</p> <p>Seven people were killed and at least 38 people were injured when the suspect, Robert "Bobby" Crimo III, allegedly opened fire on marchers and revelers, according to police. Eric Rinehart, the Lake County State Attorney, told reporters he will request a judge to hold the alleged gunman while the investigation continues.</p> <p>If convicted, the suspect faces up to life in prison without parole.</p> <p>"I want to emphasize that there will be more charges. We anticipate dozens of more charges centering around each of the victims, psychological victims, [and] physical victims," Rinehart said.</p> <p>"We will seek the maximum sentence against this offender. Not because we seek vengeance, but because justice and the healing process demand it," the state attorney added.</p> <p>The update in the investigation came after a seventh victim died Tuesday from injuries sustained in Monday's mass shooting.</p>

Jacki Sundheim; Nicolas Toledo-Zaragoza, 78; Stephen Straus, 88, and Katherine Goldstein, 64, have been identified as victims of the massacre, as well as Irina McCarthy, 35, and Kevin McCarthy, 37, whose 2-year-old son, Aiden McCarthy, survived the attack.

Authorities believe the massacre had been planned for weeks, and they say more than 70 rounds were fired from the gunman's high-powered rifle, which was similar to an AR-15.

The suspect is accused of opening fire from a roof of a business, which he accessed from a fire escape ladder, police said.

Police said Crimo wore women's clothing during the shooting to apparently allow him to hide his facial tattoos and blend in with the crowd to flee.

"Following the attack, Crimo exited the roof, he dropped his rifle and he blended in with the crowd and he escaped," police said Tuesday. "He walked to his mother's home, who lived in the area, and he blended right in with everybody else."

It appears Crimo bought the rifle legally in Illinois, police said.

Police said they are looking to talk to a witness who is believed to have seen Crimo drop the rifle behind a red blanket immediately after the shooting.

Crimo bought five guns overall, including two rifles, over the last year or so, police said.

No motive is known, police said. When asked by reporters if the gunman targeted anyone specifically, police said the "shooting appears to be completely random."

The suspect -- who was apprehended Monday evening after an hours-long manhunt -- is answering questions from investigators and has made statements taking responsibility for the attack, according to multiple law enforcement sources.

In 2019, a family member reported that Crimo said he was going to "kill everyone" at the home, police said Tuesday. Authorities confiscated knives, a dagger and a sword at the time, police said.

There was no information that he possessed any guns at that time and there was no probable cause for arrest, police said.

Later Tuesday, the Illinois State Police released more information regarding the fallout from that incident.

"No one, including family, was willing to move forward on a complaint nor did they subsequently provide information on threats or mental health that would have allowed law enforcement to take additional action. Additionally, no Firearms Restraining Order was filed, nor any order of protection," state police said.

State police said Crimo told authorities "no" when asked if he felt like harming himself or others, and that his father "claimed the knives were his and they were being stored in the individual's closet for safekeeping."

"Based upon that information, the Highland Park Police returned the knives to the father later that afternoon," Illinois State Police said Tuesday night.

At the time of the incident, the alleged gunman didn't have a Firearms Ownership ID (FOID) card; however, two months later, he applied for one at the age of 19, state police said.

"The subject was under 21 and the application was sponsored by the subject's father. Therefore, at the time of FOID application review in January of 2020, there was insufficient basis to establish a clear and present danger and deny the FOID application," state police said.



The suspect passed four background checks when purchasing firearms, state police said -- in June 2020, twice in July 2020 and in September 2021. The only offense included in his criminal record "was an ordinance violation in January 2016 for possession of tobacco," state police said, adding that they have "no mental health prohibitor reports submitted by health care facilities or personnel."

The alleged gunman is believed to be linked to social media posts that discuss or depict acts of violence, including shooting people, a law enforcement source briefed on the case told ABC News.

Online posts include a video showing what appears to be a portion of the same parade route where the shooting took place.

In a video posted more than a year ago to his YouTube page, the suspect is shown in what appears to be a depiction of the aftermath of a school shooting.

The alleged gunman had been living with his uncle, Paul Crimo, but the two barely interacted beyond exchanging hellos, Paul Crimo told ABC News.

Paul Crimo said he last spoke to his nephew the evening before the shooting and said he was shocked to learn about his alleged involvement.

He described his nephew as quiet and respectful and said the 21-year-old never mentioned firearms.

A representative for Township High School District 113 confirmed to ABC News that the suspect attended Highland Park High School from Aug. 26, 2015, to Aug. 24, 2016, but couldn't provide more details.

Rinehart told reporters there was no application to get a court order to take away the suspect's weapons following his past allegations.

However, he emphasized that the state's "red flag" laws, under which a family member can ask a judge to take a person's firearms away if they think they pose a risk, keep communities safe and pushed for a bigger awareness of those laws.

"We must vastly increase use of the Illinois red flag law," he said.

Rinehart also called for a ban on assault rifles.

"Studies have shown that mass shootings like what happened yesterday went down during those 10 years, we should have that same ban in Illinois, and beyond in the entire country," he said, to applause from the crowd.

The state attorney said the investigation is ongoing and asked anyone with information or footage from the scene to call his office.

The mass shooting broke out when the suburban Chicago parade was about three-quarters of the way through Monday morning, authorities said.

Revelers fled in panic, leaving behind empty strollers, overturned chairs and half-eaten sandwiches.

When the gunfire erupted, parade-goer Zoe Nicole Pawelczak grabbed her dad and started running through the sea of people.

"I saw multiple people slaughtered," she told ABC News.

"Everybody is crying. We ended up making it behind a corner and we hid behind a dumpster. This man was there with his two very young children and he had put them in the dumpster for safety," she said.

Pawelczak said the man wanted to leave to find his other son, and asked her to watch the two children in the dumpster.

"So I watched his kids for him," she said. "They were like, 'What's going on?' And I was like, 'It's just fireworks, it's OK,' just trying to keep them calm."

Dr. David Baum was watching his grandson, daughter and son-in-law march in the parade when the gunfire began.

"Bodies were horribly, horribly, horribly injured from, you know, guns and bullets that were made for war -- not for parades," Baum said of some of the victims.

"The paramedics went quickly and assessed the damages -- saw bodies that were blown apart and put a blanket over them quickly. And then went on to try and help other people," he told ABC News. "These are injuries that nobody should have to see."

"A lady told me, 'Are you ok?' I told her yes. And she goes, 'But you're hurt, you're bleeding,' and that's when I looked at my foot and my shoe was full of blood," Lorena Rebollar Sedano told ABC News. "I mean, I'm telling you, we were right there - we were like the target for the gunshots."

Crimo was at large for hours after the shooting. After police released an image of Crimo and his car Monday evening, he was spotted driving and led police on a brief pursuit, authorities said.

He was stopped at U.S. Highway 41 and Westleigh Road in Lake Forest, Illinois, where he surrendered, according to police.

A second weapon, also purchased legally by Crimo, was found in the car, police said.

On Tuesday evening, Steve Greenberg, an attorney representing the suspect's parents, released a statement from the couple saying their "hearts, thoughts and prayers go out to everybody."

"We are all mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers, and this is a terrible tragedy for many families, the victims, the parade-goers, the community and our own," the statement read.

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HEADLINE	<b>07/05 Pierce Co. 4<sup>th</sup> July weekend auto thefts</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.q13fox.com/news/nearly-50-auto-thefts-reported-in-pierce-county-over-4th-of-july-weekend">https://www.q13fox.com/news/nearly-50-auto-thefts-reported-in-pierce-county-over-4th-of-july-weekend</a>
GIST	<p><b>PIERCE COUNTY, Wash.</b> - The Puget Sound Auto Theft Task Force (PSATT) is reporting a 4th of July weekend full of vehicle thefts, with nearly 50 of them happening in Pierce County.</p> <p>In a <a href="#">Facebook</a> post on Tuesday, the PSATT revealed a full list of active and closed car thefts, ranging from near-violent incidents to stolen catalytic converters, in cities all over the county. The full list can be found below, but some thefts from over the weekend are worth highlighting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In Tacoma, a 2001 Mitsubishi Box Truck was stolen from the 1700 block of S. 95th St. The victim, armed with a shotgun, found the truck with the suspects still inside and approached them. One of the suspects, armed with a chain, got out of the truck and started swinging the chain around as they approached the victim. Authorities say the victim fired off a round from the shotgun and the suspects took off.</li><li>• According to the PSATT, a 2018 Jeep Grand Cherokee was stolen from Larson Motors in Puyallup. Authorities say the suspect came into the dealership and acted interested in purchasing a car. During the test drive, the suspect rode in the passenger seat. The employee eventually brought the car back to the dealership, stepped out and left the car running and unattended. That's when the suspect hopped in the driver seat and took off with the Jeep.</li></ul>

- The PSATT says a woman was threatened with a knife when her 2007 Toyota Yaris was stolen from the Apex Apartments. Authorities say she parked her car in the parking lot, and was immediately approached by two men, armed with a large knife. The suspects stole her purse and then drove away in her car.
- Authorities say a 2008 Acura TL was stolen from Safeway on 38th St. in Tacoma over the weekend. According to the PSATT, the victim parked the car and went inside, leaving his passenger with his keys. When the victim came back to the parking lot, the passenger and the car were missing.

Here are the rest of the auto thefts reported over weekend:

#### DUPONT

- 1993 Honda Accord stolen from the Creekside Village Apartments.

#### EDGEWOOD

- 2010 Ford Econoline stolen from the Arbors Apartments. It was later recovered in Tacoma with the catalytic converter missing.
- 2014 Kia Forte stolen from the Overlook Terrace Apartments. This vehicle was left unattended, running with the keys in the ignition.

#### FIFE

- 1999 Chevrolet Silverado stolen from the Bella Sonoma Apartments. The owner found it parked at the Guesthouse Inn in Fife.
- 1995 Subaru Legacy stolen from the Rainier Point Apartments.

#### LAKEWOOD

- 1998 Honda Civic stolen from the Cascade Apartments.
- 1998 Subaru Legacy stolen from the parking lot of PetSmart.

#### MILTON

- 2002 Ford F-250 stolen from the 700 block of Vine Ct.

#### PUYALLUP

- 2002 Ford Econoline stolen from the Terrace on Meridian Apartments. This car was recovered at the Copper Valley Apartments.
- 2017 Chrysler 300 stolen from the Stillwater Apartments. Authorities say the car was believed that have been taken by a known acquaintance of the owner. It has since been recovered, located in the 1300 block of 31st Ave SW.
- 1999 Honda Civic stolen from the Sunset Garden Apartments.
- 2001 Ford Econoline stolen from the South Hill Mall. The car was later found at a homeless encampment in the 3500 block of Pacific.

#### TACOMA

- 2003 Ford F-550 was stolen from the Valley Tavern. The vehicle was later recovered near E Morton and E K St.
- 1990 Toyota Camry was stolen from the 1400 block of S Cushman Ave.
- 2010 Ford F-150 was stolen from the parking lot of Walmart on S. Union. The truck was later recovered at 2320 Center St.
- 1989 Jeep Comanche was stolen from the Apex Apartments.
- 1999 Dodge Ram was stolen from the 2700 block of N Union. Authorities say the suspects involved used a garage door opener from the truck to break into the owner's garage and steal their belongings.
- 2004 Mitsubishi Lancer was stolen from the 3600 block of S. Lawrence St.
- 2001 Honda CRV was stolen from the parking lot of the Summit Salon Academy.
- 1995 Jeep Grand Cherokee was stolen from the 400 block of S. 43rd St.
- 2010 Kia Rondo was stolen from the Tacoma Mall. Authorities say the car was later recovered near 76th St and Hudson St and was reportedly burnt by the suspects.

- 2000 Ford Ranger was stolen from Home Depot on Center St.
- 2010 Ford Econoline was stolen from the 1300 block of 56th St.
- 1979 Ford Pickup was stolen from the 1300 block of N. Heatherwood. Authorities say the suspects stole the truck after burglarizing the victims home.
- 1997 Ford Ranger was stolen from the 100 block of N Tacoma Ave.
- 1999 Honda Civic was stolen from the 3700 block of 48th Ave NE.
- 2015 Ford F-150 was stolen from the 5200 block of E Portland Ave. Authorities say the truck was taken during a residential burglary.
- 1997 Nissan Pickup was stolen from the 5800 block of Fawcett Ave.
- 2012 Hyundai Elantra was stolen from the 9300 block of S. Alaska St.
- 2006 Ford Econoline was stolen from the 900 block of S. Jackson Ave.
- 1994 Ford Ranger was stolen from the parking lot of Ross. Authorities say the car was later recovered near 3640 S. Cedar.

#### UNINCORPORATED PIERCE COUNTY

- 2000 Honda Civic was stolen from the 11200 block of Ainsworth Ave S.
- 2006 Ford F-250 was stolen from Walgreens. Authorities say the truck was left unattended, running in the parking lot.
- 1995 Honda Civic was stolen from the Alderra Apartments. Authorities say it was later recovered in the area of 55th Ave NE and Norpoint Way NE.
- 2001 Ford F-550 was stolen from the 15800 block of 66th Ave NW. Authorities say the truck was stolen during a commercial burglary.
- 2006 Ford F-150 was stolen from Westcoast Auto Center. Authorities say the suspect pushed passed an employee and jumped into the driver seat of the running vehicle and sped out of lot. The vehicle was later recovered at the Motel 6 in Fife.
- 2002 Toyota Echo was stolen from the Alta Apartments.
- 2009 International Box Truck was stolen from the 2200 block of 183rd St Ct E. Authorities say it was later recovered in the 1800 block of 172nd St E.
- 1999 Toyota Camry stolen from the South Hill Target.

According to the comment section of their [July 5 Facebook post](#), not every citizen's stolen car was listed on the PSATT's recent update of stolen cars. Several people responded to the post, adding their own stolen vehicle's information, make, model, year and plate number.

For instance, not included on the list is a 1970 Ford Mustang that was stolen from downtown Gig Harbor on July 1.

In April, the Washington State Patrol (WSP) released a report revealing that vehicle thefts across the state have increased [88% since 2021](#). The [Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs](#) (WASPC) blames the state's revised laws on police pursuits, which went into effect in July 2021. Their estimate is that, barring any change to the laws, 2022 would end with more than 50,000 cars stolen.

The Puget Sound Auto Theft Task Force is dedicated to investigating car thefts in cooperation with the Bonney Lake Police Department, the Federal Way Police Department, The Lakewood Police Department, the Pierce County Sheriff's Office, the Port of Seattle Police Department, the Tacoma Police Department and the Washington State Patrol.

Anyone with information about a stolen vehicle is urged to contact the PSATT tip line at 253-329-2442 or email [autothefttips@wsp.wa.gov](mailto:autothefttips@wsp.wa.gov).

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